

Gal 10 c c

AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT;

INTENDED AS AN
INTRODUCTION
TO
pts
THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES,
BY POINTING OUT
The LEADING SENSE and CONNECTION of the
SACRED WRITERS.

By WILLIAM GILPIN, A.M.
PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY, AND
VICAR OF BOLDRE, IN NEW FOREST, NEAR LYMINGTON.

THE THIRD EDITION, CORRECTED.
IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR CADELL AND DAVIES, IN THE STRAND.
1798.

2



P R E F A C E

TO THE

A C T S O F T H E A P O S T L E S.

WE have seen, in the gospels, an account of the life and death of our blessed Saviour. The Acts of the Apostles, on which we now enter, give us an account of the progress of Christianity after his ascension.

This history is supposed to have been written by St. Luke : for which supposition we have every evidence which, in a point not absolutely certain, we can desire. It bears the marks of his pen ; and all the writers of antiquity mention it as his ; Clemens, Polycarp, Irenæus, Origen, and Eusebius*.

To this history it hath been objected, that it does not answer its title. It is called the *Acts of the Apostles* : but it gives us only the history of *one* of them, and that not complete.—In a good degree this is true ; but, in the first place, it does not appear that this was its original title. It is rather probable, that it was of later date ; and that as the gospels contained the *Acts of Christ*, this book in contrast was inscribed the *Acts of the Apostles*.—But the title is of little moment : it is enough if the history gives us all the knowledge on the subject we want.

* See Dr. Whitby's Preface to the Acts of the Apostles.

Now the great point which seemed wanting in the history of the gospel, was its connection with the Gentiles. The evangelists had given us the history of our blessed Lord, and his opening the gospel to the Jews. But it would have been too great a chasm in the sacred story, if after all the prophecies in favour of the Gentiles, we had been indebted to prophane history alone for our accounts of their conversion. As St. Paul, therefore, was the great apostle of the Gentiles, the history of his life was the history also of this great revolution in the church. So far, therefore, seems true, that the history, which we call the *Acts of the Apostles*, might more properly have been inscribed, *The history of the conversion of the Gentiles*.

But besides the very interesting light in which this record appears as a valuable piece of church-history, it recommends itself farther to us as a very strong proof of the truth of the Christian religion. Our Saviour chose his disciples from the lowest stations of life : he chose such instruments as were the least likely, on worldly principles, to complete his designs. During his life-time, they followed their master indeed ; but they followed him with supine hearts. They were impressed neither by the sublimity of his instructions, nor by the force of his example. Innocence of life was all they could pretend to. Nor wholly to this ; for jealousies and worldly prejudices of different kinds had strong possession of them. They had no idea of the great work of redemption, but a quick sense of temporal grandeur. When Jesus instructed them in some noble theme, their thoughts were generally occupied on some worldly meditation : and with a simplicity bordering on weakness, they mistook every thing their master said.—The free-thinker displays his wit on these frequent mistakes of the disciples ; and thinks they might at least have been concealed, for the honour of *the early propagators of the gospel*. We think otherwise. We think the behaviour of the disciples was the natural be-

haviour of men of their character; and the recording of such behaviour was no more than was justly to be expected from honest men, who were concerned for every thing that concerned the truth, which this eminently did. Such instruments were plainly unequal to the work of propagating a new religion; and their weaknesses were recorded by themselves, to shew they did not pretend to be equal to it. If they had concealed their weaknesses, they would so far have lessened the evidences of the gospel.

Let us now see the behaviour of these same men, as exhibited in the *Acts of the Apostles*. Those worldly ideas, which had before taken such possession of their hearts, were now totally renounced. They no longer contended which of them should be the greatest. True Christian humility, a total indifference to the things of this world, and a serene, heavenly-mindedness, became the distinguished parts of their several characters. Instead of that gross ignorance, that constant mistaking of their master's instructions, their minds were suddenly illumined; they saw clearly the truth: they had just conceptions of the whole scheme of redemption; and an amazing power in impressing the doctrines of it on the minds of others. Fears and apprehensions no longer threw difficulties in their way: no efforts of their enemies, not even death itself, in all its terrors, could affright them from their duty.

When, therefore, we see these same men represented under these different characters, and almost instantly changed from one character into the other, what are we to think? How can we account for it? Or how can it rationally be accounted for, unless by supposing they acted under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which their Master had promised to send them after his ascension? — Among the strong evidences therefore in proof of the Christian religion, this certainly deserves a very distinguished place.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

JESUS's last interview with his disciples, and ascension, 1—Matthias is chosen an apostle, 2—Descent of the Holy Ghost, 4—Opposition of the Jews: Peter's apology; and its beneficial effects, 5—First persecution of the Christian church, 9—Unanimity and charity of the Christian church: the exemplary punishment of Ananias and Sapphira, 13—Second attempt against the apostles, 16—The election of the seven deacons, 18—The apology and death of Stephen, 20—Persecution and flight of the church at Jerusalem, 24—Settlement of the church at Samaria, with the transaction of Simon Magus, 25—Philip's transaction with the Ethiopian, 26—The conversion of Saul, 28—Peter visits the churches, 31—and restores Tabitha, 31—The conversion of Cornelius, 32—Settlement of the church at Antioch, 37—Herod's persecution; and the miraculous deliverance of Peter, 38—The circuit of Paul and Barnabas through the churches of the lesser Asia, 41—The decree made at Jerusalem, to absolve the Gentiles from the use of Jewish ceremonies, 49—An account of Paul's circuit through several parts of Asia, Greece, and Syria, 54—History of Apollos, 67—Transactions of Paul at Ephesus, 68—Paul's last circuit through Greece and Asia to Jerusalem, 72—The opposition and persecution he met with at Jerusalem, 80—He is sent prisoner to Cæsarea, where he is tried before Felix, the Roman governor, 87—He is tried before Festus, and appeals to Cæsar, 92—makes his apology before Agrippa, 95—His voyage and shipwreck on the isle of Malta, 98—Circumstances which happened there, 103—St. Paul's voyage, and journey to Rome, 105—Circumstances which happened there, 106.

ACTS of the APOSTLES.

WHAT I have already written, Theophilus, CHAP.
I.
contains an account of the life and doctrine of Jesus Christ, till the time of his ascension; 1. 2. 3. 4.
including the forty days he continued with his disciples, from his resurrection; in which he gave them infallible proofs of the reality of that event. At that time also he instructed them not to leave Jerusalem till they should receive the Holy Ghost; 5.
reminding them of what they had heard him say, that John baptized only with water; but that he should baptize them with the Holy Spirit of God.

So little, however, did they, at that time, understand these things, that, after the great event of his resurrection, 6.

1. *To begin to do a thing*, has been shewn by many good critics to be a Greek idiom for *doing it*.

6. Dr. Clarke rather supposes, that the disciples were not quite so gross in their ideas as to expect a mere *temporal kingdom*; but rather that *great restoration* which it was supposed the Messiah would effect. — Be it as it will, it was a *curious* question, and could administer no instruction *to them*; though the relation of the case is very instructive *to us*. *It is not for you*, said our Saviour, *to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath reserved in his*

2 ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

resurrection, they asked him, Whether he then meant to restore the kingdom of Israel to its ancient glory?—Jesus told them, it was not for them to inquire into the times and seasons of things, which the Father reserved in his own power. They had concern only with what related to themselves, and the great errand on which they were sent. They should propagate the gospel, and confirm the truth of it, both among the Jews and Gentiles; and should be endowed with sufficient power to this purpose, through the influence of the Holy Ghost.

9. This was one of the last discourses which Jesus held with his disciples. Soon afterwards, he was taken from them; and in their sight ascended into heaven.—As they stood eagerly gazing after him, it pleased God to quiet their anxiety, by sending two angels to them; who, appearing in a luminous form, 10. said, You disciples of Jesus, why stand you here, 11. expecting his return? He will return; but not till that time when he shall come to judge the world. 12.13.14. —These things were done on the mount of Olives, from whence the apostles, returning to Jerusalem, assembled, in acts of devotion, with the mother of Jesus and others of his followers.

15. At one of these meetings, when about one hundred and twenty disciples were present, Peter stand-

his own hands: intimating by this gentle but evasive answer, that although an inquiry into these curious matters could not well be considered among very blameable things, yet it certainly deserved no encouragement.

ing

ing up, made the following propofal.—How ^{16.17.18.}
dreadfully, faid he, Judas hath applied to himfelf ^{19. 20.}
that paffage in the Pfalms, in *making his habitation*
defolate, both by his unnatural treason, and his
violent death; you all know. Let it be our bufi-
nefs, then, to fulfil a fecond paffage in the Pfalms;
and as he hath *made his habitation defolate*, let us
provide that *another may take his office*. From ^{21. 22.}
thofe, therefore, that have accompanied the Lord
Jesus through the whole of his miniftry—from his
baptifm till his refurrection, let us ordain one to be
a witnefs, together with us, of that great event.—
This propofal being agreeable to the whole affembly, ^{23.24.25.}
they refolved, according to the ancient Jewish cus-
tom on folemn occafions, to leave the matter to
the appointment of the Almighty, by a decifion
of lots. They propofed, therefore, two perfons;
Jofeph, called Juftus, and Matthias; and praying to
God, as the fearcher of hearts, to direct their choice,
they gave out the lots. Matthias, being the chofen ^{26.}
perfon, immediately joined the eleven apoftles. ✓

18. *Purchased a field*—that is, *was the caufe of purchafing*. This is a common mode of fpeaking.

23. See Levit. xvi. 8.—Numbers xxvi. 55.—Jofh. xiii. 6.—Judg. xx. 9.—1 Chron. xxiv. 5.—Prov. xvi. 33.

25. The words, *that he might go to his own place*, have occafioned fome difficulty. Some interpreters refer them to Judas, who was *to go to the punifhment he deferved*. Others refer them to the new-elected apoftle, who *was to take the place affigned him*. For myfelf, I fhould refer them to Judas; but without configning him immediately to a place of punifhment. *He went to the place which God had appointed*. The fame mode of fpeaking occurs in two of the moft early writers—Clement, and the Shepherd of Hermas, both of whom fpeak of martyrs *going to the place* which God appointed.

II.

1. The time now approached, when the great promise of the Holy Ghost was to be fulfilled. The circumstances of that wonderful event were these.
2. As the whole body of the disciples were assembled at the celebration of the feast of pentecost, they were at first astonished with a sound, like a rushing wind,
3. which filled the house in which they sat. This was succeeded by a luminous appearance like fire, which, in the form of tongues, rested on the head of each
4. person present. The effect immediately followed. They were all inspired with the Holy Ghost; and found themselves endowed with a miraculous power of speaking languages.

5.6.7.8 9. There were, at this time, at Jerusalem, on the
10.11.12. occasion of the feast, a numerous body of Jews and

1. As it was provided by the providence of God, that Christ should suffer and rise again at the time of the passover, when the greatest number of people were assembled; so likewise, for the same reason most probably, the Holy Ghost was given at the time of the pentecost; and, no doubt, the numbers of strangers who saw that great miracle, prepared the way, on their return home, for the better reception of the gospel in their several countries. — They who received the Holy Ghost, seem not only to have been the apostles, but at least the hundred and twenty disciples besides, who are mentioned Acts i. 15. — The word *ὁμοθυμαδον*, *with one accord*, seems put in to shew, that all heart-burnings and jealousies about superiority had now ceased among the apostles; and that they were perfectly unanimous in the great work they had in hand.

3. *Διαμερισθεντας* does not properly signify *cloven*, as we translate it; but *distributed*, i. e. among them. This sense, however, which appears to be a corrupt one, gave the idea probably of the mitre, with which the ancient bishop was adorned.

5. *Dwelling at Jerusalem*, means only sojourning there at that time. See the sense of the original word given by Grotius. Acts ii. 5.

profelytes,

profelytes, from several parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia; who, being informed of this great event, had conversation with the disciples; and were astonished to hear them discourse with every man, in his own language, on the great truths of the gospel.

Opposition, however, soon arose; and such of the 13.
Jews particularly, as were prejudiced against the gospel, gave out, that these languages, which the disciples of Jesus were said to speak, were only the effect of drunkenness.

On this, Peter entered largely into the affair. He 14. 15.
first shewed the absurdity of any such supposition, were it only because it was the hour of morning-sacrifice. It could not be supposed they would perform divine worship in an act of *drunkenness*; when every serious Jew thought himself bound in conscience to perform it *fasting*.—He then called to 16. 17. 18.
their remembrance the prophecy of Joel, who very distinctly points out the effusion of God's Spirit in the days of the Messiah, on people of all conditions; reminding them, at the same time, of the 19. 20.

11. Here is no mention made of the Greek language; from whence some have supposed the Greek was not among the inspired languages; as indeed it was then almost every where vernacular. But I suppose every language was inspired if unknown and wanted.—The great necessity of this gift in the early propagation of christianity, is set in a very strong light by Crantz's relation of the Greenland mission; in which, among a variety of difficulties, the great impediment was, not being able, during many years, to communicate by speech.

16. See Joel ii. 28, &c.

- threatenings which are held out in that remarkable prophecy—the misery which is denounced—and the destruction which is to follow, on the whole Jewish
21. nation.—Lastly, he dwelt on the means of salvation, which the prophet promises in the following words; *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord*
- 22.23.24. *shall be saved.*—Consider, said he, to whom the prophet alludes in this passage. That holy person, Jesus of Nazareth, who wrought so many miracles among you, and whom (though he voluntarily died for mankind, and could not be held by the grave) you cruelly and unjustly put to death, hath God now raised from the dead; according to another prophecy, that of David, who represents the Messiah
- 25.26.27. triumphing over the grave: *Therefore did my heart*
28. *rejoice, and my tongue was glad: my flesh also shall rest in hope, because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption.*
29. —The holy prophet, continued the apostle, could not speak this of himself; for he is both dead and buried; and his sepulchre is with us to this day.
30. But knowing, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost,
- 31.32. that God intended the Messiah should spring from his seed, he speaks in the spirit of prophecy of that great event, the resurrection of Jesus, of which we
33. are witnesses.—After his resurrection, he was received into glory; and hath now fulfilled his pro-

22. *A man approved of God.* The original rather signifies a man pointed out to you by God, through the means of miracles, &c.

25. Psalm xvi. 9.

mise, by sending this miraculous gift upon his followers; the effect of which you now see and hear.

—His ascension also is as much the subject of 34. 35. prophecy as his resurrection. When David says, *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*; he cannot possibly be supposed to apply the words to himself; but to the exalted power of the Messiah.— Let the house of Israel, then, at length be assured, 36. (added the apostle, in conclusion,) that that Jesus whom they crucified is the undoubted Messiah, the redeemer of the world.¹

Words never produced more effect on a multitude 37. than this speech of Peter. His audience, many of whom had probably either been concerned in the death of Jesus, or consented to it, were confounded by his reasoning; and eagerly besought him and the rest of the apostles, to instruct them how to avoid those heavy judgments denounced by the prophet.

Peter earnestly exhorted them to be baptized in 38. the faith of Christ; and by amending their hearts, to receive the remission of their sins. He promised 39.

34. Ps. cx. 1.

38. *Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.* It is remarkable, that when the Jews are spoken of as baptized, they are commonly baptized in *the name of Jesus Christ*, as they generally disallowed him to be the Messiah. But the Gentiles, with whom the controversy was not so much concerning the *true Messiah*, as concerning the *true God*, were baptized in the name of *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*. See Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 122.

39. *To all that were afar off.* By this expression the apostle probably had reference only to the dispersed Israelites; but the *Holy Spirit* might have reference to the Gentiles. See Ephes. ii. 13.

8 ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

them also the gift of the Holy Ghost; and assured them, that the promises of the gospel were made to them and to their children, and to all the faithful people of God, wherever dispersed. — To this he added other exhortations; frequently reminding them of the judgments which should speedily overthrow the Jewish nation; and which he warned them to endeavour with sincere repentance to avoid.

40. 41. 42. 43. At the conclusion of these exhortations, not fewer
44. 45. 46. than three thousand were baptized, and embraced the
47. faith of Christ. The generality of the people, indeed, were only astonished at what they had seen; but the

41. It is probable the other apostles also might assist in making the same exhortations to other bodies of strangers, and that they all contributed to this wonderful and sudden conversion.

42. *Breaking of bread* here, is not generally considered by interpreters in this sense. But, I think, from its being placed between the *apostle's doctrine* and *prayer*, it cannot well have the acceptation of a common meal; though, I think, common meals seem to be understood by the same expression in v. 46.

45. Many interpreters do not suppose they had a community in all things; but I think from the case of Ananias it is very plain they had; though it as plainly appears, from what St. Peter said on that occasion, that this communication was a *voluntary* one: and from many passages of scripture we may gather that it was meant only to be a *temporary* one. In the gospels and epistles a distinction is always supposed between poor and rich; nor could the affairs of the world possibly be carried on without it. At this early time, indeed, when all charity ceased towards Christians, but among themselves, a *communication* of property seems to have been necessary.

47. *Such as should be saved*, says the text: but not so much as should be saved by the determined will of God; but such as (v. 40. 42.) *saved themselves from that untoward generation*, by continuing in the apostles doctrine. — Besides *οὐ σωζομενοι* cannot with any propriety be rendered, such as *should be saved*; but *such as were saved*: that is, such as were placed by baptism, faith, and repentance, in a state of salvation; but this state they must of course maintain afterwards by a holy life.

true

true believers were still confirmed more steadily in their profession—joining with the apostles in prayer, and the celebration of the Lord's supper—praising and thanking God for his mercies—selling their possessions, that all might have a community in worldly things—and uniting with each other in every instance of love and kindness with cheerfulness and sincerity.—This generous behaviour drew upon the infant-church the respect and reverence of all observers; and numbers daily joined themselves to their communion.

The peace and happiness which the church enjoyed endured not long. It was first disturbed on the following occasion.—As Peter and John were going to prayer in the temple, a lame man, who had been a cripple from his youth, and was laid at what was called the *Beautiful-gate* by his friends, begged for alms. As he expected, from the attention with which the apostles beheld him, to receive some present relief, Peter told him, that as for the riches of this world, he had none to give; but that what was in his power, he should confer on him. He then bad him, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk. On this the man immediately received perfect strength; and went with them into the temple, to praise God for his mercy.

This great miracle occasioned a vast concourse of people in Solomon's porch; where Peter and John, and the man, as they came out of the temple, were presently surrounded.

Peter,

CHAP.
III.

1. 2.
3.

4. 5.

6.

7. 8.

9. 10. 11.

12. 13. 14.
15. 16.

Peter, thinking this a proper occasion to instruct the multitude, thus spoke.—Men of Israel, said he, be not surprised at what you have just seen; nor consider us as more than the instruments of this great miracle. That Jesus, whom you denied before Pilate, and by wicked suggestions put to death, hath God raised from the dead. We are the witnesses of his resurrection; and allege this great miracle, done in his name, and through faith in him, as a proof of that wonderful event.—And yet I will not suppose,

17.

that the murderers of the holy Jesus knew whom they put to death. Be that as it may, the prophecies which foretold the Messiah's death were thus

18.

completed.—Fully convinced, then, from this miracle, of the completion of these prophecies, let me exhort you to faith, repentance, and holy lives. Let me exhort you also to the recollection of another great event coming forward—the general doom and judgment of mankind, by that same Jesus whose

19. 20. 21.

gospel is now preached. Hear what your great law-giver, Moses himself, says on this head; *A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me: him shall you hear; and every*

22. 23.

16. This verse is a striking example of the inaccuracies which improper pointing sometimes introduces into the sacred text. If the middle part of the verse were pointed properly, the sense, which is now embarrassed, would be easy. Τον ον διαψυχοι, εγερσιν. Το ονομα, &c. Θεος, in the former verse, is the nominative case to εγερσιν. The sense will then run thus: "Whom God raised from the dead; and through faith in his (Jesus's) name hath made this man whole. His name, I say, and faith through it, hath given, &c."

22. Deut. xviii. 18, 19.

soul

soul that will not bear that prophet shall be cut off from the people.—Nor did Moses alone predict 24.
these things; but all the succeeding prophets unite 25. 26.
in declaring, that to you first, as the children of the
covenant, hath God published salvation through Jesus
Christ, if you are convinced by his resurrection, and
will lead holy lives.

CHAP.

IV.

1. 2. 3.

While Peter was thus speaking to the people, the
priests and Sadducees, and officers of the temple,
came upon him, and seized both him and John, and
threw them into prison; being greatly disturbed at
finding the doctrine of the resurrection preached,
and at its acquiring additional strength by the re-
surrection of Jesus.—This violence, however, did 4.
not prevent the effects of the apostle's exhortations;
for the number of profelytes was now increased to
about five thousand.

The next day, the chief priests and elders called a 5. 6. 7.
council; and sending for the apostles, bad them
give a plain account of their transaction with the
lame man, which had occasioned so much disturb-
ance.—With the dignity of an inspired apostle, 8. 9.
Peter told them, that to this inquiry a ready answer
might be given. Through the name of Jesus Christ, 10.
said he, whom you crucified, and whom God raised
from the dead, hath this great miracle been per-

4. It does not appear that five thousand *new* profelytes were
added; but that what were now added made the number five
thousand. Erasmus is of this opinion. *Jam enim numerus cre-*
dentium accreverat usque ad quinque virorum millia.

11. formed. He is that stone which was set at naught by you builders ; and which is, notwithstanding, the
 12. head of the corner—the only origin and source of salvation to mankind.
13. The Jewish priests being well informed that the two apostles had been the companions of Jesus ; and knowing them to be obscure, illiterate men, were astonished at the dignity and spirit with which Peter
 14. spoke. At the same time, seeing the man who had been healed, standing before them, they were
 15. 16. 17. unable to deny the fact. Commanding the apostles,
 18. therefore, to go aside, they consulted what was best to be done ; and at length resolved to forbid them
 19. to preach any longer in the name of Jesus.—But Peter and John, with great firmness, bad them consider, whether it were right to listen to God or them?
 20. and gave them to understand, that they certainly should continue to give their testimony to the great
 21. 22. truths which had been intrusted to them.—The chief priests, however, satisfied with threatening them a second time, set them at liberty ; being afraid of the people ; on whom the restoration of a man, who had been forty years lame, had had a wonderful effect.

13. It is no wonder they were surprised ; for Peter's speeches are very convincing pieces of composition.

19. We have a noble expression of the same kind which Plato puts in the mouth of Socrates : He tells his judges, that he was determined to avouch his doctrine, and that for this reason ;
πιστομαι τῷ Θεῷ, μαλλον ἢ ὑμῖν.

The

The apostles being dismissed, retired to their company, and reported what had happened. In consequence of this deliverance, the church united in a thanksgiving to God.—They praised him for all his wonderful works—and particularly for the completion of his holy promises in the ineffectual efforts of all the enemies of religion—and concluded with begging God's assistance in giving them courage and ability to preach his word, and power to confirm the truth of it by miracles.—When their prayer was concluded, the place where they had assembled was shaken, as before, with a strong wind; and the Holy Ghost fell on all who were present, inspiring them with new powers to continue the great work in which they were engaged.

In the mean time, while the apostles bore testimony to the truth of the gospel, particularly to the resurrection of Christ, love and kindness, in the highest degree, were exercised among all who embraced the faith. No man claimed a property in any thing he possessed. So that, of course, neither superfluity nor want existed among them. The common stock was put into the hands of the apostles, who distributed it according to their discretion.

31. It is left undetermined by St. Luke, what number of new proselytes were assembled on this occasion, and received the Holy Ghost. It seems most probable, that the whole five thousand were present. The only difficulty is, how so great a number should be accommodated in one place.

35. The sacrifices of the temple, of which the common people partook, were a great relief to the Jewish poor. As the Christian converts were deprived of this, some other relief was the more necessary. Hence community of property seems to have arisen.

Among

36. 37. Among those who converted their estates into public property, the most considerable was Joses of Cyprus, a Levite, who sold some lands which he possessed in that island, and brought the produce to

CHAP.

V.

1. 2.

the apostles. This holy person obtained afterwards the surname of Barnabas. But among other professors of christianity, there was a certain person of the name of Ananias, who, with his wife Sapphira, wished to gain the credit of this disinterested behaviour, without subjecting themselves to the worldly inconveniences of it. They might wish also to gain, at an easy rate, a share in the public contributions. Ananias, therefore, sold his lands; and out of the produce, brought a *certain part* to the apostles, as if it had been the *whole*. But instead of meeting the approbation he expected, Peter gave him a severe rebuke, for attempting to deceive the Spirit of God. Before the land was sold, said he, was it not your own? And afterwards, was not the price your own likewise? Who demanded it of you? You have not endeavoured to deceive man only; but the Holy Spirit of God.—On hearing this, Ananias fell down instantly dead; which threw a religious fear on all who were present.

6. 7. About three hours after he had been carried out to his burial, his wife, knowing nothing of the matter, came in: and Peter asking her, Whether the price that had been brought was the full value of the land? she affirmed it was. Then Peter spoke to her in the same severe language in which he had spoken to her husband; and taxed her with the great
fin

sin of endeavouring to deceive the Holy Spirit of God. On this she too fell down dead; and was 10. carried out and buried near her husband.

The exemplary punishment which God thought 11. 12. 13. proper to inflict on this occasion, added great 14. weight and reverence to the apostolic character; no man daring from henceforward to unite himself with the apostles *on any worldly motives*. Multitudes, however, of true believers were daily added to the church, through the efficacy of the miracles, which were wrought in the most public manner—often in the streets, where the sick were brought in 15. couches, and wished only to receive the shadow 16. of Peter, as he passed by. From several parts of the country also around Jerusalem, sick people were brought to the apostles, and immediately found a cure.

10. Some exemplary punishment seemed necessary to prevent people's joining the apostles on false pretences; and discrediting the Christian religion in its infancy by worldly motives. This effect, as we are told (ver. 13.), immediately followed. —But this offers no argument in favour of persecution. Who inflicted the punishment? was it man or God?

11. There is some confusion in the order of the verses here; which may be restored in the following manner, which Bowyer tells us he had from the mouth of Bp. Sherlock. 11. *And great fear came upon all the church, and as many as heard these things.*

14. *And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.* 12. *And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.* 13. *And of the rest durst no one join himself to them: but the people magnified them.* 12. *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought;* 15. *inasmuch, that they brought, &c.* See Bowyer's Conjectures.

15. I think it does not appear that cures were actually effected by the shadow of Peter; but that the common people had such an opinion of him that they expected it.

The

17. The chief priests and Sadducees, of which sect
18. were most of the Jewish doctors, being exceedingly
provoked at these proceedings, seized the apostles
19. again, and threw them into prison. But it pleased
God to deliver them in the night by an angel;
20. under whose direction they went in the morning, as
usual, into the temple, and taught the people.
21. The chief priests, in the mean time, called a coun-
22. 23. cil, and sent to the prison for the apostles. The
officers returned with an account, that they had
found the prison shut and guarded; but that the
24. prisoners were gone. While the council were per-
25. plexed at this unaccountable event, they received
information, that the men whom they had impri-
26. 27. 28. soned the day before, were, at that very time, preach-
ing in the temple. On this they sent a guard, and
brought them without violence, (for they feared the
people,) and questioned them for their insolence in
teaching a religion, which the council had forbidden
them to propagate any farther. You have filled
Jerusalem, said they, with your doctrines; and
seem desirous of bringing this man's blood upon us.
29. —The apostles answered, with that firmness which
they had shewn before, that it was their duty to
30. 31. obey God rather than man. The same Jesus, said
they, whom you crucified, hath God raised from
the dead, and exalted to be the Saviour of mankind,
32. through the conditions of faith and repentance. We
are the witnesses of his resurrection; as is also
the Holy Ghost; the effects of whose gracious op-
erations you have seen so wonderfully displayed.—

This

This bold language irritated the council so much, 33.
 that some of the warmest of them seemed to think
 they ought immediately to proceed capitally against
 the apostles.—There sat at that time, however, in 34.
 the council, an eminent doctor, named Gamaliel, a 35.
 man of cooler judgment, who, removing the apostles,
 warned the assembly to be cautious what they did
 in this matter. We have heard of many people, 36.
 said he, who have professed themselves to be the
 deliverers of Israel, whose attempts have come to
 nothing. Such was Theudas, who got together
 about four hundred men; but perished in his enter-
 prise, together with his company. After him ap- 37.
 peared Judas of Galilee, who drew together a great
 body of people: but he too lost his life, and all his
 followers were dispersed. Be advised, therefore, and
 let these people alone. If their designs depend only 38.
 on human means, like other designs of the same
 kind, they will come to nothing. But if they are 39.
 of God, you yourselves may be crushed by opposing
 what it will not be in your power to suppress.—
 This prudent advice had great weight with the as- 40.
 sembly. They called the apostles, therefore, again
 before them; and ordering them to be scourged,
 dismissed them, with strict injunctions to preach
 no more in the name of Jesus. They, however, 41.

36. Josephus mentions a person of the name of Theudas, who
 made an insurrection; but it was ten years after this time. Dr.
 Lardner (Cred. vi. p. 403.) supposes two insurgents of that name.
 Archbp. Usher supposes it a mistake for another Judas, who made
 an insurrection, according to Josephus, a little after the death of
 Herod the Great.

- regardless of any menaces, and counting it matter of joy, that they were thought worthy of suffering for their religion, continued, both publicly and privately, to preach the gospel.

CHAP.
VI.

1. } Soon after this, some unquietness arose in the Christian church (now become considerable) from another cause.—Among its profelytes were many foreign Jews, who complained that their poor did not receive an equal proportion from the common stock, with such Jews as were natives of Judea.—
2. 3. 4. The apostles, inquiring into this matter, called a general assembly of the church; and urging their own necessary avocations, in the ministry of the gospel, as not allowing them to attend to the distribution of alms, desired them to choose, from the whole body of Christians, seven men of eminent sanctity and wisdom, whom they might appoint over this business.—The proposal pleased the whole assembly; and they chose Stephen, a man of great piety and Christian zeal; Philip; Procorus; Nicanor; Timon; Parmenas; and Nicolas, a profelyte of Antioch. These seven were brought to the

1. These Jews commonly spoke the Greek language, and were therefore called Ελληνισται: the native Greeks were called Ελληνες. But some are of opinion that the Ελληνισται were heathen converts to Judaism.

3. This verse is much used in the argument about church government; though it seems to carry no authority in the question. The designation of these seven men was undoubtedly an apostolic act: but they seem to have been designed only to the office of almoners.

5. From the names it seems probable, that some of these were Ελληνισται; which shews it to have been an election of great impartiality. The last was certainly a foreigner.

apostles, who approved the choice; and, after solemn prayer, confirmed them in their office.

In the mean time, the gospel continued to make a great progress; and began now to gain ground among the higher ranks of people; many even of the priests having embraced it. But among the several professors of it, no man, except the apostles, contributed so much to extend its influence as Stephen; who did not confine himself merely to the station which had been assigned him, but with wonderful force of argument, as well as by miracles, displayed the power of the gospel.

There were at that time in Jerusalem a body of foreign Jews, both Africans and Asiatics, who had a synagogue appropriated to themselves, called the Synagogue of Freedom. These men frequently engaged in dispute with Stephen on the Mosaic dispensation: but not being able to oppose him by argument, they commenced a prosecution against him; and stirring up many of the Scribes and Pharisees, and a large body of people, they brought him before the Sanhedrim; and accused him, by witnesses, whom they had suborned, of having spoken contemptuously both of the *temple and the Jewish law*; and of as-

9. It is probable that all the foreign Jews had synagogues appropriated to themselves; some of which synagogues, as many Jews were freemen of Rome, might derive their title from thence. See Lardner's *Credib.* part i. ch. iii. Professor Gerdes supposes they took their name from *Libertina*, a city of Africa; which also Lardner seems to think a probable supposition.

15. ferting that *Jesus of Nazareth was come to destroy both.*—The countenance of Stephen, while he stood before the council, and heard so much malicious testimony against him, was full of that divine and heavenly composure, which drew the attention of the whole assembly.

CHAP.
VII.

1. After the witnesses had been heard, the high-priest asked him, What he had to say in his defence?—Stephen, in a long apology, laboured to convince his hearers, that God was no *respector of places*—that their fathers had worshipped in various countries; and that even the temple itself was built late in the
2. history of the Jews.—He traced the divine dispensations

2. As Stephen was accused of conspiring to destroy the *Jewish temple and the law*, it seems to have been his most *obvious* intention, in thus recapitulating the history of the patriarchs, to shew, that the temple-establishment had not always existed; and that there was no necessity to suppose it always should exist; as the Jews especially had rendered themselves so unworthy of this divine dispensation by persecuting the prophets, and putting their Saviour to death.—Some interpreters give a different view of Stephen's argument. They say, the drift of it was to caution the Jews against rejecting Christ, as they had rejected Moses and the prophets. This, no doubt, makes a *part* of his argument, but it does not seem the *purport* of it.—Others again suppose, that Stephen's great intention was to exhibit Joseph and Moses as types of Christ; who were both rejected by their brethren, as Christ also was, and corresponded with him in many instances of their lives. This too he certainly has in view; but this does not appear to be the drift of his argument.—The following analysis I had from a friend: "Stephen, in reply to the charge against him, recapitulates the several incidents of the Jewish history, as we should do the articles of our creed. He then retorts the accusation of the Jews upon themselves. He shews, that a blasphemous contempt of Moses and the law was not to be imputed to him, but to them and to their forefathers—that

sations from the time of Abraham. That great patriarch, said he, first worshipped God in Mesopotamia. From thence he was sent to Haram; and afterwards into the land which you now inhabit. But he had no possession in it; resting merely on a promise, that his family, after suffering the miseries of bondage, should worship God there, as they had done in other places. But the covenant of circumcision was given long before; and that rite was observed by Abraham in his pilgrimage, just as it is observed by you at Jerusalem.—The next mi-

3. 4.

5. 6. 7.

8.

9. 10. 11.

—that their forefathers had always resisted the authority of Moses, when present; as they, on their part, had refused to acknowledge the authority of Moses in the scriptures: for it was evident to all, who believed the Mosaic scriptures, that Moses prophesied of Christ. And as to his speaking blasphemously against the temple, he spoke of it only as he was warranted by what God himself says in their own scriptures; where he intimates, that he does not mean to have his worship confined to any one particular place. He then reproaches them in bitter terms for their obstinacy and rebellion in resisting the Holy Ghost; and persecuting those, in the first instance, who prophesied of the just One; and afterwards that just One himself, when he made his appearance among them.”—From these different explications it is plain, however, that the apology of Stephen is a difficult passage of scripture, and that it is hard to make out what the chief intention of it was. For myself, I am most inclined to the interpretation I have given; and have therefore abridged the detail of the history of the Jews, that Stephen’s argument may appear with more force. At the same time, I think it very probable that he might *intend covertly* to shew the Jews, that by rejecting Christ and his apostles, they were pursuing the very steps of their forefathers, who had rejected the prophets.—There are other difficulties, though I think of little importance, in this apology of Stephen. They regard chiefly the dates and numbers mentioned in the 4th, 6th, and 14th verses; and the burial of the patriarchs in the 16th.

7. *Will I judge.* Bp. Pearce observes, that the law *tries, sentences, and executes*; and that the word *κρίμα* relates sometimes to one, and sometimes to another of these operations.

12.13.14. gration of our fathers was into Egypt. Here Joseph,
 15.16. under the immediate influence of God, saved the
 land of Egypt, and all his father's house, from the
 effects of a famine: and here Jacob, at his son's
 request, brought his family to sojourn. Here those
 holy patriarchs worshipped the God of their fathers;
 17.18.19. and here they finished their earthly course.—The
 evils of their posterity increasing as the people mul-
 tiplied, Moses, who had been educated by Pharaoh's
 daughter in the learning of Egypt, and had been
 obliged to fly the country for an ineffectual endea-
 20.21.22. vour to assist his countrymen, was afterwards called
 23.24.25. by God to lead them out of bondage by a high
 26.27.28. hand.—But even Moses himself, the founder of
 29.30.31. the Jewish government, who received the law from
 32.33.34. God, through the mediation of an angel, is so
 35.36.37. far from supposing his institution to be of perpetual
 38. obligation, that he mentions the Messiah, under the
 title of a great prophet, who was to arise after him.

20. *And was exceeding fair: ACTS TO GIN.* This mode of ex-
 pression is agreeable to the Hebrew idiom. Great cedars are
 called, *cedars of God*; Ps. lxxx 10: and great mountains, *moun-
 tains of God*; Ps. xxxvi. 6.—Josephus tells us, that nobody
 could look at Moses without being struck with his beauty.

22. Moses is said to be mighty in *deeds* as well as *words*; which
 some have imagined to allude to a story told by Josephus, that
 upon an invasion of Egypt by the Ethiopians, Moses was ap-
 pointed general of the Egyptian forces, and drove the invaders
 back with great slaughter. Antiq. lib. ii. 10.

30. The burning bush, which was not consumed, is thought
 by many to have been a very apposite sign to Moses. The people
 whom he was to relieve were indeed greatly oppressed: but it was
 as easy for God to deliver them from that oppression, as it was for
 him to prevent the bush from being consumed by the fire that was
 in the midst of it. The one was a sign of the other.

—Con-

—Consider also how unworthy this sinful nation ^{39.40.41.} hath made itself of a perpetual establishment. From ^{42. 43.} the times of Aaron and the golden calf, recollect its constant succession of idolatries and rebellions. It is true, our fathers had the ark under a tabernacle ^{44.} in the wilderness, built after the fashion which God had appointed—it is true also, that they carried it ^{45.} with them into the land of promise, and carefully maintained it till the days of David, and afterwards till the days of Solomon, who was permitted to build ^{46. 47.} that temple which his father only designed.—All ^{48.49.50.} this is true; but it is as true, that God hath all along declared by his prophets, that he will not be considered as dwelling in the narrow limits of a temple made with hands; but as filling the universe which he hath created—as making heaven his throne and earth his footstool.—Stephen concluded his apo- ^{51.52.53.} logy by telling the council, that he foresaw they would resist the Holy Spirit of God, and oppose the truth, as their fathers had done before them. The only difference was, that their fathers had persecuted those who prophesied of the Messiah; while they had persecuted the Messiah himself; and that, in short, they were the persons, not he, who *had set at naught both Moses and his law.*

This severe charge threw the council into the ut- ^{54.} most rage.—Stephen, seeing to what lengths their ^{55.56.57.}

43. The phrase, *taking up the tabernacle of Moluc*, relates to the practice of carrying about the image of the God Moluc, on solemn occasions, in a shrine.

malice would arise, told them he was prepared for the utmost effects of it—that he saw heaven opened—and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.—On this they cried out with loud voices—stopped their ears, as if such blasphemy was not fit to be
 58.59.60. heard; and rushing upon him with one accord, dragged him out of the city, and stoned him. He, in the mean time, thoroughly impressed with the
 CHAP. spirit of the religion he had embraced, prayed for
 VIII. his murderers, and recommended his soul into the
 1. 2. 3. 4. hands of his Saviour.—They who stoned him, gave their garments in charge to a young man of the name of Saul, who stood by as an assenting spectator of the death of Stephen.—After the Jews had thus sated their vengeance, Stephen's friends were suffered to carry his dead body to burial; which they performed with great lamentations.

The death of this holy man was the beginning of a violent persecution against the church at Jerusalem; which separated in different ways, to avoid it. None of any eminence continued in the city, except the apostles. Among such as took the most

58. This seems not to have been a *judicial* but a *tumultuary* action; what the Jews called the *judgment of zeal*. They could not legally put a criminal to death without the cognizance of the Roman governor.—Some, however, are of opinion, that the *judgment of zeal* was permitted by the Romans.

59. The dying words of Stephen contain so plain an act of worship to Christ, that it seems difficult to evade them. They are not so strong indeed in our translation as in the original, where the word *God* is not found.

active part in this persecution, was Saul, who was very zealous in executing the orders of the Sanhedrim.—These efforts, however, to destroy Christianity, tended only to propagate it the more, by the preaching of those who fled into other countries.

Among the most eminent of these preachers, was 5. 6. 7. Philip, one of the seven deacons who had been ordained by the apostles. This holy man went to 8. Samaria, and preached the gospel there with such power, and confirmed the truth of it with so many miracles, that the people universally attended to him, and the whole city was filled with religious joy.

There dwelt in Samaria, at that time, a person of 9. 10. 11. the name of Simon, who had deceived the people by his pretences to miraculous powers; making them believe he was something more than human. How- 12. 13. ever, this person himself seemed so convinced by the preaching and miracles of Philip, that he was baptized, as others had been, and professed himself a disciple.

Some time after, the apostles, at Jerusalem, hear- 14. 15. 16. ing of the success of the gospel in Samaria, sent 17. Peter and John to give weight to the ministry there; and through the prayers of these apostles, all the

5. The old town of Samaria was at this time destroyed; so that Philip must have gone to some town in the *district of Samaria*.

25 ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

new profelytes, who had yet only been baptized in the name of Jesus, received the Holy Ghost.

18. 19. When Simon saw that the apostles, by laying on their hands, conferred the Holy Ghost, and the power of working miracles, he made them an offer of a sum of money to grant him that privilege.—
20. But Peter, with great indignation, rebuked him for supposing the gift of God could be purchased
21. by money. He told him, that he was yet wholly
22. 23. unacquainted with the spirit of the gospel; and bad him repent of his sins, and pray to God to forgive
24. the wickedness of his heart.—Simon seemed greatly affected with the severity of this rebuke; and begged the apostles to join in prayer with him, that God would avert the evils which they had
25. threatened.—Soon after, the two apostles returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in the Samaritan cities through which they passed.
26. Philip, in the mean time, was sent on a different errand. He was ordered, by the direction of an angel, to go to the road which leads from Jerusalem

24. Some suppose the expression, *Pray ye to the Lord for me, &c.* was spoken as an ironical taunt.

25. It seems that the account of these two apostles coming from Jerusalem, is introduced here for the sake of the relation of Simon Magus; about whom there might have been probably, at that time, some misrepresentations which it was thought necessary to obviate.

26. Arrian, in his history of Alexander, mentions Gaza as the last town that was inhabited before you enter the desert between Phenicia and Egypt.

to Gaza, as it enters the desert. There a person 27. 28.
 of great authority, in the court of Candace, queen
 of Ethiopia, was returning home from Jerusalem,
 where he had been worshipping, (as all serious pro-
 phelytes were accustomed to do at the great feasts,)
 and Philip was ordered by the Spirit to join him. 29. 30.
 He found the Ethiopian reading the prophecy of
 Isaiah; and asked him if he understood what he
 read? The other answered, he did not; and con- 31.
 ceiving Philip to be a person of information, desired
 him to come up to him into his chariot, and explain
 it. The passage he read was in the fifty-third
 chapter: *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and 32. 33.*
like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so he opened not
his mouth: in his humiliation, his judgment was taken
away; and who shall declare his generation? for his
life is taken from the earth. Now of whom, said the 34.
 Ethiopian, doth the prophet speak—of himself, or
 of some other person?—Philip, beginning at this 35.
 passage, opened to him the dispensation of the gos-
 pel; and by his discourse, produced such an effect 36.
 on the Ethiopian, that when they came to a pool of
 water, he desired he might immediately be admitted

27. As the word *Εὐρυς* has an ambiguous sense, signifying also sometimes a chamberlain, I leave it undetermined.

27. Pliny speaking of an island appendant on Ethiopia, under the name of Meroe, tells us that Candace reigned there, quod nomen multis jam annis, ad reginas transit. Hist. Nat. lib. vi. Strabo also mentions Candace, queen of Meroe in Ethiopia, lib. xvii.

33. *A person's judgment being taken away*, was a sort of proverb for being oppressed. See Job xxvii. 2.

37. to baptism. Philip asked him, if he believed sincerely in Jesus Christ, the Son of God? The Ethiopian professing his faith, was accordingly baptized. After the ceremony, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip to Azotas, where he preached the gospel; and from thence, in all the other towns in his way to Cæsarea. In the mean time, the Ethiopian returned home full of religious joy.

CHAP.
IX.

1. 2. During these transactions, Saul, who was one of the most zealous persecutors of the church, having heard that many Christians had fled to Damascus, desired letters from the high-priest to the synagogue there, ordering them to deliver to him all the Jews of that persuasion, that he might bring them to be punished at Jerusalem. Having received a commission, he set out on his journey. But as he

40. The miraculous mission of Philip to Gaza, to meet the Ethiopian, was, no doubt, an intervention of Providence to prepare the way for the gospel in Ethiopia; where, as Eusebius informs us, this treasurer of queen Candace first planted it: and some of the fathers apply to this conversion that passage of the Psalmist as a prophecy, *Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.* Psal. lxxviii. 31. The manner in which Philip was conveyed away from the Ethiopian, seems to have been intended as a miracle, to convince him of the truth of the religion he had just embraced.

2. Damascus in Syria stands upon a plain so extensive (as Maundrel informs us) that the mountains which surround some parts of it are only just discernible. The river Barrady which issues from the mountain of Antilibanus, runs through the plain; and arriving at Damascus, divides into three streams: the intermediate one passes through the town; and the other two, on each side, circle its suburbs. The city, as you approach it, makes a grand appearance; its mosques, steeples, and minarets being very stately.

approached

approached Damascus, a sudden light from heaven
 shone round him; and as he fell to the ground, he 4.
 heard a voice, saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest
 thou me? He had recollection enough to ask, 5.
 Who it was that spoke? The voice answered, I
 am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. Why opposhest
 thou the will of God? Saul, overwhelmed with 6.
 amazement, and struck at once with horror at his
 late conduct, asked, trembling, What he should
 do? Go to Damascus, returned the voice, and it 7.
 shall there be told thee. In the mean time, the
 men who travelled with him stood speechless, hearing
 a voice, but not understanding the import of it.
 —As for Saul, as soon as he had raised himself 8.
 from the ground, he found he was deprived of his
 sight; and was obliged to be led into Damascus,
 where he continued three days in a state of con- 9.
 trition, prayer, and fasting.—At the end of that 10. 11. 12.
 time, a Christian, of the name of Ananias, who
 lived at Damascus, was sent by a heavenly vision to

5. *It is hard for thee to kick against pricks*, was a proverbial expression, signifying impotent rage, that hurts only ourselves.

7. When St. Paul gives an account of this vision at Jerusalem, (Acts xxii. 9.) he says, the men *heard not the voice*; though in this verse he says *they did hear it*. The contradiction is very easily reconciled by supposing, they were so terrified that they heard nothing articulate.

8. Paul's being deprived of sight, and restored to it again, expresses, as some suppose, the idea of that darkness in which he had formerly lived, and of the light which now shone upon him.

11. *Tarsus* was a town in Cilicia, famous both for its trade and for being a seat of learning. It is supposed to be the old Tarsish mentioned so often in the Old Testament.

restore

13. 14. restore him to sight. Ananias, knowing the character of Saul, could not help expressing his apprehensions of him. But he was given to understand how great a conversion had been wrought in him; and to what eminence he should hereafter arise in the Christian church, as the great apostle of the Gentiles. Ananias, thus instructed, went to Saul, and told him, that Jesus, who had spoken to him on the road, restored him to sight; adding, that he should receive the Holy Ghost. His sight being accordingly restored, he was baptized; and recovered by degrees from that state of distress into which he had been thrown. Then joining himself to the disciples, he began to preach the gospel, to the great astonishment of all who had known his former life; and applying all his learning in the Jewish law, to the support of Christianity, he confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, and proved plainly, from their own scriptures, that Jesus was the Messiah.
23. 24. 25. Some time after, the Jews laid in wait for him, and watched at the gate of the city to seize and destroy him. But Saul being informed of their intention, escaped over the wall, and went to Jerusalem. Here also he was at first received with suspicion; till Barnabas carried him to the apostles,

20. Paul preached Christ in the synagogues that he is the Son of God: the precise meaning here is, that he affirmed and proved that that Jesus who had been crucified at Jerusalem, was the Messiah.

26. This was the journey which Paul mentions, Gal. i. 18.

and related all the circumstances of his conversion and faith, on which he continued to preach in concert with them.—Here too with great strength of argument he disputed with the Grecian Jews. Afterwards, when they attempted to seize him, the apostles thought it proper to send him to Tarsus.

At this time the churches, which were now multiplied, had peace; and rejoiced in the goodness of the Lord. Peter taking the opportunity of this quiet season, made a progress among them, and went first to Lydda. Here he found a person of the name of Eneas, who had been eight years a paralytic, whom he healed in the name of Jesus Christ; and by this miracle converted many of the Jews who dwelt at Lydda, and in the vale of Saron.

Another miracle also, which he performed at that time, had great effect in converting the Jews of those parts.—A pious and very charitable woman

34. The word *εσκευασεν* does not properly signify *make thy bed*: but *make the room ready for thy guests*. The same word is used in that sense, Mark xiv. 15, and Luke xxii. 12.—The case seems to be this. Peter was in Eneas's house with other guests, as was not uncommon in the houses of sick people, when only *confined*, as in this paralytic case. To shew, therefore, the greatness of the cure, Peter bad Eneas arise, and himself make his room ready for his guests.

35. Lydda was a celebrated town in Judea, in which were public schools, and where the Sanhedrim sometimes met.—The vale of Saron, or Sharon, was remarkable for the many villages that were scattered about it, and for its rich pasturage. See 1 Chron. xxvii. 29.

36. Joppa was a sea-port on the Mediterranean, not far from Lydda.

at Joppa, of the name of Tabitha, being dead, the disciples there sent two of their body to Peter at Lydda, to desire him to come to them. Peter immediately went, and was carried into an upper chamber, where he found the corpse laid out for burial, and a number of poor widows standing round it, lamenting their loss, and shewing their several garments which the holy woman had given them. Peter removing them from the chamber, that their lamentations might not interrupt his prayers, kneeled down, and prayed fervently to God. He then arose, and calling her by her name, her life returned, and she was presented by the apostle to her friends in perfect health.—After this, Peter continued at Joppa some time longer; during which the divine Providence brought about one of the greatest events of the Christian church.

CHAP.

X.

1. 2. It happened, that among the Roman troops at this time stationed at Cæsarea, was a centurion of the name of Cornelius, a man of eminent piety and charity, which virtues had been diffused by his example through his family. This person, being favoured by an angelic vision, importing the ac-

1. At the time of this transaction, the gospel had been carried to the utmost verge of Judea; and this was the breaking down of the partition-wall—the veil of the temple rent in twain.

2. The expression *φοβούμενος τον θεον* commonly signifies a person who acknowledged and worshipped the true God, but did not pay obedience to the law. He was called a proselyte of the gate by some; while others allow no such person; but suppose the Jews divided mankind merely into Jews and Gentiles. See the question discussed in Dr. Lardner's Evangel. Writers, chap. xviii.

ceptance of his good works in the sight of God, was ordered to send to Joppa for the apostle Peter, who should instruct him in a still purer faith than he had yet received: in obedience to which vision 7. 8. Cornelius immediately sent proper persons on so desirable an errand.

In the mean time, it pleased God, as this was the 9. 10. first instance of Gentile conversion, to allay the prejudices which Peter might have on that subject, in the following manner.—The apostle having been 11. 12. at prayer, and being afterwards hungry, while food was preparing for him, fell into a trance, and saw a large sheet, held by the four corners, full of different kinds of animals, clean and unclean, descending towards him. As he stood beholding it, a voice 13. from heaven bad him take and use without distinction. Peter, offended at the idea, said, he had 14. never been accustomed to eat any thing unclean. The voice answered, What God hath cleansed, that 15. call not thou unclean. This was repeated three 16. several times. While Peter was hesitating and 17. 18. 19. doubting in himself, what might be the meaning of this vision, he had a secret intimation from the Holy Spirit, that certain persons, who then waited for him,

9. The roofs being flat, it was common to walk on the tops of houses.

16. A third action has generally been considered, both among sacred and prophane authors, as a sign of earnestness and certainty. Thus St. Paul says, *I besought the Lord thrice*; and thus Virgil,

—Terque ipsa solo, mirabile dictu,
Emicuit—

should explain the intention of what he had seen ;
 20. and was ordered to accompany them without ob-
 21. jection. Peter immediately going down, found the
 22. messengers from Cornelius ; and asking the cause of
 their coming to him, was informed of the several
 circumstances of the vision which Cornelius had
 23. seen. Peter kept them with him that night ; and
 the next day set out with them to Cæsarea, attended
 by some of the brethren from Joppa.

24. On the following morning they arrived at Cæsarea,
 where Cornelius, with a company of his friends,
 25. was expecting them. When Peter's arrival was
 known, Cornelius went out to meet him, and fell at
 26. his feet. But Peter raising him, gently rebuked
 him for giving that honour to a man, which was due
 27. only to God. Peter then entering the house, and seeing
 28. so numerous a company assembled, made an apology
 for himself, as a Jew, for this familiar intercourse
 with Gentiles, saying that God had instructed him
 to make no distinction between them and the Jews.
 29. He then inquired into the reason why Cornelius had
 30. 31. 32. sent for him.—Cornelius related the particulars of
 33. 34. his vision ; which Peter comparing with what he
 himself had seen, said, he was now fully convinced

25. Many interpreters suppose, that Cornelius took Peter for
 an angel : but his having been the subject of an angel's mission
 was certainly ground enough for Cornelius to consider him as a
 person of high dignity. The Romans never used prostration to any
 human being.

30. *Four days ago I was fasting until this hour* : that is, four days
 ago I kept a fast from the morning till the ninth hour.

that

that God made no distinction among the several nations of the world; but was ready to admit all religious people of every denomination, as well as Jews, to the blessings of the gospel. He then set before them the great object of a Christian's faith—Jesus Christ, sent by God to be the Saviour of the world—who, after John the Baptist had prepared his way by preaching repentance, had, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, wrought many miracles to establish the faith of mankind in his doctrine. Of these great events, and of his death and glorious resurrection, Peter told them, he and the rest of the apostles were witnesses chosen by God. They had been conversant with Jesus both before and after his resurrection; and were appointed to publish to mankind remission of sins, through faith and repentance—to inform the world, that Jesus will be the judge of quick and dead—and to open and unfold all the

41. The expression, *Not unto all the people, but unto chosen witnesses*, has given great offence to free-thinkers. Why not unto all the people?—God Almighty might have many reasons. One or two even human prudence may suggest. Suppose Christ had shewn himself formally to the chief priests, and they had attempted again, as they probably would, to seize him: he must by a miracle have escaped out of their hands. And might not this have given occasion to their saying, that the resurrection also was a mere *illusion*.—Suppose again his enemies, who had seen him, should have denied it, (as they appear to have been capable of any thing,) would not this have made their evidence, if appealed to, worse than their giving no evidence at all?—Besides, all the people might have seen him if they had pleased: all that is meant is, that the apostles only were the appointed, chosen witnesses. Five hundred together, we know, at one time, did see him. 1 Cor. xv. 6.

prophecies which bear testimony to the great truths concerning him.

- 44.45.46. While Peter was thus speaking, it pleased God, on this solemn occasion of the first Gentile conversion, to pour out on all who were present the gift of the Holy Ghost, with its miraculous accompaniment of speaking languages.—This exceedingly astonished the Jewish Christians who came
47. 48. with Peter. That apostle, however, conceiving the gift of the Holy Ghost to be a sufficient evidence of the faith of these converts, ordered them immediately to be baptized.—After this, he continued, at the request of these new disciples, some days longer at Cæsarea.

CHAP.

XI.

1. In the mean time, the account of what had happened at Cæsarea being brought to Jerusalem, gave much offence to the Jewish Christians, who thought the privileges of the law had been invaded;
2. 3. infomuch that when Peter returned to Jerusalem, he found the matter very ill-understood, and many of the disciples disposed to find fault with his behaviour.—On this, he gave them a plain relation
4.5.6.7.8. of the whole affair from the beginning—of the vision which *he* had seen—of the vision which *Corne-*
9. 10. 11. *lius* had seen—of his visit to that pious centurion;
12. 13. 14. and of the descent of the Holy Ghost. He then
15. 16. put them in mind of what Jesus himself had said, that *John indeed baptized with water; but that they*
17. *should be baptized with the Holy Ghost;* and concluded with saying, that as God had signified his
pleasure

pleasure that the Gentiles should be admitted to the same communion with themselves, it was not his part surely to oppose the will of God. — This 18.
relation of the affair had its full effect; and the whole assembly united in praising God for making the Gentiles partakers with them of the benefits of the gospel.

While these things were doing at Cæsarea, the 19.20.21.
gospel began to extend, in another quarter, as far as Antioch, and the country in its neighbourhood. Here it was preached by some of the disciples who had fled from Jerusalem, on the persecution which had followed Stephen's death; and being accompanied by miracles, had great success. It was now preached both to Jews and Gentiles.

The apostles at Jerusalem being informed of the 22.
disposition of Antioch to receive the gospel, immediately sent Barnabas thither, who found great cause 23.
for rejoicing; and exhorted the new converts to continue steadily in the faith they had professed. Barnabas was a man of a mild and amiable disposition; and being aided by the gifts and graces of 24.
the Holy Spirit, he won greatly upon the people, and brought a large addition to the church. But 25.
thinking there was still occasion for more assistance, he went to Tarsus for Saul, and returned with him

19. Ελληνιστας in some copies is Ελληνας; and indeed there seems to be a distinction between the Grecians mentioned ver. 20, and the Jews mentioned ver. 19. See a note on Acts vi. 1.

26. to Antioch. Here these two apostles continued a full year, and formed a very considerable church, the members of which were first known by the name
27. 28. of Christians.—About the end of the year, a disciple of the name of Agabus, coming with some other disciples from Jerusalem, declared at Antioch, in the spirit of prophecy, that there should soon be a great famine through Judea, which accordingly
29. came to pass. On this, the church of Antioch made a collection for their brethren there, and sent it to Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

CHAP.

XII.

1. 2. 3. 4. While the affairs of the church were in this prosperous situation at Cæsarea and Antioch, Herod Agrippa, with a view to please the Sanhedrim, began a severe persecution against the Christians at

26. The word *χρηματίζω* properly signifies obtaining a name from a calling; of which kind of names we have many in England, as *Smith, Miller, Carpenter, &c.* One should imagine the name of Christian was first given in contempt; both because the people of Antioch were said to be of a scurrilous, jelling humour; and because Tacitus, when he mentions Christians, expresses himself under this idea, *vulgus christianos appellat.*—The word apostle is not always strictly confined to the twelve. Barnabas is called an apostle. Acts xiv. 14.

28. *Οικουμένη*, in the original, is supposed by some to signify the Roman empire; but it is most commonly confined in this passage to Judea. Josephus speaks of a famine in Judea at this time, but mentions no other place; and indeed if it had raged in Syria, the Christians there could not have been so well able to send relief to their brethren in Judea.

1. This Herod was the grandson of Herod the Great; and is represented by Josephus as a pious prince, greatly observant of the ceremonies of the Jewish religion. If this was the case, he was probably led by his Jewish prejudices to persecute Christianity.

Jerusalem.

Jerusalem. He first put James, the son of Zebedee, to death; and soon after apprehending Peter, threw him into prison, with a view to execute him also, after the ensuing passover. For the deliverance of this great apostle, the church made constant prayers to God, which it pleased the Almighty to answer. For as Peter, the very night before Herod intended to put him to death, was sleeping between two soldiers, who guarded him, an angel appeared in heavenly brightness, and awaking him, bad him rise. His chains immediately falling from his hands, he threw his mantle about him, and followed the angel, scarce knowing whether he were yet awake. Under this divine conduct, he passed securely through all the guards, and came to the large iron-gate which led into the city. This opened of its own accord; and as they were now in the street, the angel left him.—Peter come entirely to himself, and conceiving fully the gracious deliverance he had received, went to the house of a religious woman of the name of Mary, the mother of Mark, where many pious Christians were then assembled at prayer.—On Peter's knocking, a young woman went

2. The early martyrdom of St. James, was no doubt an instructive lesson to the apostolic college, by shewing them, that the miraculous powers with which they were endowed, could not secure them from the malice of their enemies.

6. Four quarternions of soldiers were sixteen, four of whom watched by turns; and the apostle was chained to two of these, according to the Roman custom.

13. It was common among the Jews, to give the names of plants and flowers to their female children. Rhoda signifies a

14. went to the gate; but instead of opening it, on knowing his voice, she ran with joy to inform the
 15. family: but they paying little regard to her at first,
 16. were above measure astonished, on finding it was
 17. really Peter himself.—The apostle then related to them the circumstances of his great deliverance; and desiring them to inform his brethren, retired himself to a place of security.
18. 19. In the morning there was great confusion among the soldiers; and though Herod, on examining the case, could find no circumstances of neglect, he ordered the whole guard to be put to death.—But that wicked prince knew not how soon his own end was approaching. From Judea he went to Cæsarea;
 20. where the Tyrians, fearing his displeasure, had sent ambassadors to pacify him. On a set day he gave them audience; and being magnificently arrayed,
 21. he made a solemn oration, which was received as if
 22.

rose; Tamar, a palm; Edeffa, a myrtle; Susannah, a lily. Sometimes they would give the names of animals also: as Tabitha and Dorcas, signifying in Hebrew and Greek, a goat or roe.

15. The text says, they supposed it was ο αγγελος αυτου. Some imagine they meant, what we call in English, his *ghost*: others, his *guardian angel*: others only a *messenger* from him.

17. It is James the less who is mentioned here: James, the son of Zebedee, had been put to death.

20. *Because their country was nourished by the king's country.* The Tyrians, who were entirely a trading people, neglected agriculture, and received their chief supplies of corn from Judea.

22. We have the same account from Josephus, with many other circumstances; but none that differ materially from these. Antiq. lib. xix. ch. viii. What St. Luke calls *royal apparel*, Josephus tells us was a robe of silver tissue, most curiously wrought; on which the rays of the sun shining, as he sat on his throne, exalted above the people, gave him a most splendid and dazzling appearance.

it

it had come from a God. For his pride, cruelty, 23.
and other sins, he was struck by the hands of the
Almighty with a terrible disease, which put an end
to his life.—The gospel, however, was only the 24.
more confirmed by the opposition he had given it.

CHAP.
XIII.

In the mean time, Barnabas and Saul, having
delivered the contributions which had been entrusted
to them from Antioch, returned thither again;
where they found the Christian church considerably
increased.—Besides these two great apostles, three
others, of singular eminence, presided over it at
that time; Simeon, who was surnamed Niger; and
Lucius of Cyrene; and Manaen, who had been the
friend of Herod; but having given up his connec-
tions with that prince, had embraced the Christian
religion.

Saul and Barnabas had not long been at Antioch, 2. 3.
before they were ordered, by the particular designa-
tion of the Holy Spirit, to leave that city, and
preach the gospel in other parts; and a solemn day
of fasting and prayer was appointed, to supplicate
God for their success. Under the guidance of the 4. 5.
Holy Ghost, therefore, they went to Seleucia, taking

23. Put an end to his life—or as it is expressed in the figurative language of scripture; *The angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory.* The pride of heart which made him assume divine powers to himself, was the particular crime here laid to his charge: but he was probably a wicked prince in many other respects, notwithstanding the account of Josephus.

- Mark with them as their assistant. From Seleucia they sailed to Cyprus; and beginning at Salamis, they preached the gospel in the Jewish synagogues
6. 7. 8. through the whole island, as far as Paphos. — At Paphos resided a Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a well-disposed man; who, hearing of the two apostles, sent for them, and desired them to give him some account of the new religion they taught. In the family of the proconsul lived a Jewish magician of the name of Elymas; who, being jealous of the apostles, endeavoured to prevent the proconsul's
9. paying any attention to them. But Saul, (who took also the name of Paul,) turning to him with
10. 11. that dignity which the Holy Spirit inspired, rebuked his subtle and mischievous opposition to a doctrine, the purity and evidence of which he could not but acknowledge. He then told him, that as he had voluntarily suffered his understanding to be thus darkened, God would punish him, for a time at least, with the loss of his eyes. On this, a darkness fell immediately on him; and he discovered, by stretching out his hands, and seeking for somebody to lead him, that he was utterly deprived of sight.
12. The proconsul, impressed with the doctrine of Paul,

9. Some writers think the apostle took the name of Paul in compliment to Sergius Paulus, his first Gentile convert. Others suppose, that it was only the name he was generally known by among the Greeks and Romans; as John in England, is Jean in France, and Hans in Holland. And this is most probable. See Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebr. and Talm.* p. 739; where it appears the Jews, out of Judea, commonly took other names.

and struck with this great miracle, immediately professed himself a Christian.

The two apostles soon after, leaving Paphos, 13.
 went to Perga, in Pamphylia, where Mark left them, 14.
 choosing rather to go to Jerusalem.—From Perga
 they continued their journey to Antioch in Pisidia.
 Here they went to the synagogue on the sabbath- 15.
 day; and after the reading of the law and the pro-
 phets, being asked by the rulers of the synagogue,
 if they had any thing to say to the people? Paul
 desired their attention with the motion of his hand; 16.
 and addressing himself to the Jews in particular, and
 to all in general who believed in the true God,
 took occasion, from the sacred books which had 17.18.19.
 just been read to them, to recapitulate, in few words, 20.21.22.
 the Jewish history, in order to deduce the Messiah 23.
 from David, according to God's constant promises
 to that prince; reminding them, at the same time, 24.
 of the miraculous manner in which Christ had been
 introduced by John the Baptist; whose testimony 25.
 of Jesus's dignity, and of his own inferiority, was
 equally full.—The apostle then recommended ear- 26.
 nestly to their serious attention, the gracious offer
 of salvation through the gospel. He mentioned the 27.28.29.

13. The reason of Mark's leaving Paul at this time, is no where given. It is certain, that Paul was much offended at it. See Acts xv. 38.

14. To distinguish it from *Antioch in Syria*, from whence they had come.

15. The rulers of the synagogue were authorised to allow whom they pleased to preach.

circumstances of Jesus's death ; and shewed, that all the malice of his enemies against him, was only a direct completion of the predictions of the prophets.

30. He adverted next to his glorious resurrection ; which
 31. was proved by many of his followers, who saw him alive, and attended him through a course of several
 32. 33. days.—Thus, said he, we have opened to you those gracious promises made to our fathers, which God hath now fulfilled, in sending Jesus Christ into the world, according to the prophecy of David,
 34. 35. *Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee.*—And as to that great event, his resurrection from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, *I will give you*, said God, *the sure mercies of David : thou shalt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption.* This prophecy, he told them, alluded to the resurrection of the Messiah. Of David, no prophecy of this kind could be spoken. He saw corruption ;
 36. and so did every one, except Jesus, who had been
 37. raised from the dead. They all died again, and saw corruption.—Paul, having thus proved Jesus to
 38. be the Messiah, proceeded to point out his office. He came, said he, to offer remission of sins to man,
 39. through faith and repentance ; and to make that effectual atonement for him, which the expiatory

33. Most interpreters consider the *raising up* of Jesus in this verse as spoken of his *resurrection* : but the context and application of the prophecy rather give the sense of Christ's *being raised from the seed of David*. See Ps. ii. 7.—Isa. lv. 3.—Ps. xvi. 10.

34. *The sure mercies of David*, is taken from Isa. lv. 3, and is only a sort of proverbial mode of expressing *security*.

sacrifices of the law could not make.—Lastly, the 40. 41.
apostle warned his audience not to be found in the
number of those whom the prophet threatened with
destruction, if they refused this gracious offer, and
rejected a dispensation so clearly proved as this cer-
tainly was.

After Paul had ended his discourse, (which had 42. 43.
been heard with great attention,) the synagogue
broke up; and many of the Gentiles, as they left
the place, desired to hear the same discourse on the
next sabbath; while the apostle earnestly exhorted
several of the Jews and proselyte Gentiles, who had
been convinced by what they had heard, and pro-
fessed themselves Christians, to continue stedfast in
the faith.

On the next sabbath-day, almost the whole city 44.
met together, to attend the apostle. But the unbe- 45.
lieving Jews, of whom there were many in those
parts, being jealous of his popularity, had now
drawn together a party; and mixing with the au-
dience, interrupted Paul's discourse, and turned the
whole city into a scene of confusion.—The apostle, 46. 47.
with great plainness, told them, that it was necessary
for the gospel first to be preached to them; but as
they had hardened themselves against it, it should

41. The prophecy to which St. Paul alludes, is contained in
Hab. i. 5. where the prophet threatens the people with the Baby-
lonish captivity. St. Paul's *immediate* reference seems to be to the
destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; but he seems also, like
our Saviour, to refer to the next life.

47. The prophecy to which St. Paul particularly refers, is Isa.
xlix. 6.

now, according to the predictions of the prophets,
 48. be offered to the Gentiles.—When the Gentiles
 heard this, they glorified God; and as many, as were
 49. well-disposed, believed the gospel, which began now
 to spread through all the country.

50. This success still farther enraged the Jews, who,
 stirring up all whom they could influence, raised such
 an opposition against Paul and Barnabas, as obliged
 51. them to leave the place. Giving up, therefore, these
 infidel Jews to the judgment of God, by the cere-
 mony of shaking off the dust of their feet against
 them †, they bore the persecution they had received
 52. with holy joy, and retired to Iconium.—God did
 not, however, desert the church, which had been thus
 planted in Pisidia; but watched over it, and reple-
 nished it with his Holy Spirit.

CHAP.
 XIV.

1. 2. 3.

At Iconium the apostles preached in the syna-
 4. gogue; and had, at first, great success. They
 performed many miracles also in testimony of their
 doctrine; and numbers both of Jews and Greeks
 5. professed the faith.—But here, also, the unbeliev-
 ing Jews followed the example of those in Pisidia;
 and made it their business to form a party against the
 progress of the gospel. Afterwards, gaining the ma-
 6. 7. gistrates on their side, they laid a scheme to seize
 the two apostles, and put them to death. But they,

48. The word *ταρτα* in the original, may well signify *disposed*,
 or *prepared for*; but the translators of our English Testament
 give many words a predestinarian sense which there is no reason
 for.

† See a note on Matt. x. 14.

being aware of the design, fled to Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, and preached the gospel sometimes there, and sometimes at Derbe, and other places in that neighbourhood.

It fell out, as Paul was preaching at the former of these towns, that a person, who had been lame from his birth, was among his hearers; and the apostle, perceiving he had faith to be healed, bad him stand upright on his feet; on which he became instantly sound.—When the inhabitants of Lystra saw this, they ran about the city, crying out, that the Gods were come down among them; calling Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercury, because they observed he was the principal speaker. Nay, to such a height did their zealous phrenzy carry them, that the priest of Jupiter began to make preparations for a solemn sacrifice to them.—When the two apostles, Paul and Barnabas, heard this, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, “What mean you by this? We are men like yourselves: and are so far from suffering any devotion to be paid to us, that it is the great end of our doctrine to call men from the worship of false Gods, and teach them

11. It was very agreeable to the heathen creed, that the Gods should visit the lower world. Even Tully tells us, that Gods must have a human form, as they never appeared in any other. *De Nat. Deorum.*

13. *Jupiter, which was before their city: that is, whose statue stood at the entrance of their city.—Brought oxen and garlands: that is, brought oxen crowned with garlands.*

*Victima labe carens, et præstantissima formâ
Sistitur ante aras, vittis insignis, et auro*

OVID'S Met.

to

to acknowledge one only God, who made heaven
 16. and earth, and all things therein; and who, amidst
 all the blindness that hath overspread the world,
 17. hath always given sufficient evidence of his divine
 nature, in the works of creation, to recall mankind
 18. from the absurdity of worshipping idols."—Even
 with this language they were scarce able to repress
 the zeal of the people.

19. This popular favour, however, soon took another
 turn. The unbelieving Jews from Pisidia and Ico-
 nium, coming hither also, infused their spirit into
 the inhabitants of Lystra; and a tumult being raised,
 Paul was seized, and carried out of the city; where
 20. he was stoned, and left as dead. By the assistance,
 however, of his friends, he revived; and retired, the
 next day, with Barnabas to Derbe.

21. Here, too, the apostles preached the gospel, and
 converted many to the Christian faith. They after-
 wards returned to Lystra and Iconium, and Antioch
 22. in Pisidia; where they confirmed the converts they
 had made, and exhorted them to continue stedfast in
 the faith, notwithstanding those persecutions which
 (they saw) had arisen, and must necessarily arise
 23. again.—Then, after solemn prayer and fasting, or-
 daining elders to preside over the several churches,

20. Some interpret this as a miraculous resurrection from the dead. I think it rather appears otherwise, from the conclusion of the 19th verse, *supposing he had been dead*. See also 2 Cor. xi. 25, where this fact is referred to among other sufferings short of death.

23. These elders seem to be considered next in dignity to the apostles. Their office appears to be described Acts xx. 28.

and recommending them to the grace of God, they 24.
 passed through Pisidia and Pamphylia; and conti- 25. 26.
 nuing some time at Perga, they went to Attalia,
 and from thence by sea to Antioch in Syria, from
 whence, about two years before, they had set out.
 —On their arrival there, they called an assembly 27.
 of the church, and gave them an account of God's
 gracious dealings through their ministry; and shewed
 them, that a door was now fully opened for the gos-
 pel among the Gentiles. —After this circuit through 28.
 different parts of Asia Minor, they continued some
 time with the disciples at Antioch.

CHAP.

XV.

The first thing that disturbed the peace of the 1.
 church of Antioch, was an opinion introduced by
 certain judaizing Christians from Jerusalem, with
 regard to circumcision; which they thought all
 Christians were *obliged* to receive. —This opinion 2.
 was opposed by Paul and Barnabas with great
 warmth. But when they could not suppress it by
 their own authority, it was determined, that those
 two apostles, with some others, should consult the
 church at Jerusalem. In their way thither, through 3.
 Phœnicia and Samaria, they occasioned great joy
 among all Christians, by the accounts they gave of
 the conversion of the Gentiles. —When they ar- 4.
 rived at Jerusalem, they acquainted the apostles

4. This seems to be that journey to Jerusalem of which Paul speaks, Gal. ii. 1.

- and elders with all the transactions of the church
 5. at Antioch : and then informed them of the dissension which had been introduced by some judaizing
 6. Christians, of the sect of the Pharisees, with regard to circumcision, and other points of the law of Moses. This question the apostles and elders resolved to examine in a full assembly ; which they
 7. accordingly called. As in this assembly there were many Christians, who were strenuous upholders of the law of Moses, the question was agitated with some warmth on both sides. The great advocate for the full liberty of the Christian converts was Peter. He put the assembly in mind of the case of Cornelius ; of whom circumcision had not been
 8. 9. required. He dwelt on the descent of the Holy Ghost on several Gentile converts, which was argument sufficient that God had fully accepted them without circumcision ; alleging, that their hearts were purified, not by the ceremonies of the law,
 10. but by faith alone. Why, therefore, said he, do you go about to put a yoke on the necks of the Gentile-Christians, which neither we nor our fathers
 11. were able to bear ? We believe that we, though Jews, cannot be saved, but through the gospel ;

4. There should only be a comma or semicolon after this verse, as it is plain the 5th verse is a continuation of what the two apostles from Antioch related.

10. Some interpreters leave Θ_{10} out of this sentence, as it is not found in some of the best MSS : and tends only to embarrass the sense. The expression then is, *Why do you attempt or endeavour to put, &c.* Πειραζω however, in this sense, is not often, I believe, used with an accusative.

why should we then make the Gentiles consider the observance of this rite *necessary*, which, in our own case, we acknowledge to be ineffectual?—Peter's speech was seconded by Paul and Barnabas, who informed the assembly, that God's dealings with such of the Gentiles as they had converted, were exactly similar to the account which Peter had just given them. 12.

When they had all spoken their sentiments, James stood up, and said, " Peter hath just explained to you the circumstances which attended the first conversion of the Gentiles—a conversion directed by the immediate interposition of God. And if you examine the prophets, you will find them all speaking the same language. No mention is made of the covenant of circumcision; but that the defection of the house of Israel should be restored by calling in all the nations of the earth to worship God in holiness and righteousness of life. From the beginning, no doubt, God respected all things; and would certainly have enjoined circumcision, if it had been necessary. I see no reason, therefore, to make the Gentiles conform to it.—And yet it may be proper 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20.

13. 19. James says, *Men and brethren hearken unto me—my sentence is.* It is well Peter did not say this; it had been a good argument for the supremacy of the Pope.

17. The text quoted here is Amos ix. 11, 12. I have given what appears to be the sense of it, and what agrees with the apostle's argument. But we do not find this text with any exactness in our vulgar translation of the Bible. The apostle has evidently quoted from the LXX, which differs a little from our translation, but agrees exactly with the apostle.

- to enjoin them to abstain from some things which give great offence to the Jews; as from partaking of idol-meats, which will be considered as a kind of spiritual fornication; and from the use of blood:
21. and this prohibition should be the more general, as there are few towns, where there are any Christian converts, in which the Jewish religion is not exercised †."

This

† This whole passage is acknowledged, on all hands, to be a difficult one.—The first question that arises is, whether the prohibition of blood is meant as a *general* or as an *occasional* precept? Many things have been said with much force on both sides of the question. I know no writer who has drawn up the arguments for its being a precept of *general observation*, in stronger array, than Mr. Stackhouse: yet still, I think, the mind revolts from this idea, when we consider the liberal principles of the Christian religion—so little affected by outward observances—and so wholly delighting in inward purity—when we consider what a number of passages in scripture mention the heart only as the receptacle of virtue and vice—when we reflect, that our Saviour says, nothing entering the mouth defileth the man; and St. Paul, that we may eat any thing set before us, asking no questions for conscience sake—and when we consider lastly, that the prohibition of eating blood is not seconded by one single text of a similar kind throughout the whole New Testament: whereas, if it had been meant as a general precept, we might certainly have expected to see it confirmed by other passages; or, at least, secured against mistake in those passages which seem so directly to oppose it.—The next question relates to the word *πορνεία*. If it literally mean *fornication*, how comes it to be joined to mere *occasional* precepts? They, indeed, who contend for the literal sense, have nothing of *much weight* to say in answer to this question. It is, I think, therefore the best interpretation, and liable to the fewest objections, to suppose *πορνεία* means *spiritual fornication*; as it is often indeed used in scripture. See Rev. ii. 20—xiv. 8.—xvii. 2. 4.—xviii. 3.—xix. 2. See also Parkhurst's Lexicon.—Others, to get rid of the difficulty, for *πορνείας*, read *χορμαίας*, to abstain from *swine's flesh*; but this, I believe, rests on no authority.—The last difficulty of this passage relates to the 21st verse; *For Moses, in old time, hath in every city them that preach him; being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day.*—Some explain

This opinion of James being agreeable to the 22. 23. whole assembly, they resolved to send two persons of great eminence from their own body, Judas and Silas, together with Paul and Barnabas, to the church of Antioch, with the apostolic decree, which was to this effect.

“ Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain persons of our assembly, going over to you, have, without any authority from us, pretended to lay you under an injunction to be circumcised, and to observe the Mosaic law—it hath seemed good to us assembled in 24. 25. 26. 27. council, to send Judas and Silas, together with our beloved Paul and Barnabas, who have hazarded their lives for the gospel, to inform you, that, agreeably 28. 29. to the sense of the Holy Spirit, we think proper to lay

explain this passage, as if the apostle had said, *We need not mention these things to the Jews, because, as they constantly read the books of Moses, they are perfectly acquainted with them.* But this seems to have nothing to do with the intention of the decree; which is so far from endeavouring to rectify the opinions of the Jews, that it is not even addressed to them. It is addressed only to them which from among the Gentiles were turned to God. The intention, therefore, of this passage seems to be, as I have endeavoured to explain it, that wherever the Jews and Christians were found together, this decree should be carried and presented to the Gentiles, in order to prevent that offence which might otherwise be given to the Jews.—One thing more, with regard to this text, may be observed, which is, that the words *καὶ τῶ πικτῶ* are omitted in many MSS; and universally unknown to the Latin fathers, who leave them entirely out in all their quotations. And indeed the words seem of no use in the text; for the only reason for abstaining from things strangled is, that the blood might not be eaten with the flesh.

28. *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us—that is, it was agreeable to the sense of the Holy Spirit, as declared in the case of Cornelius, &c.—that the Gentiles need not be circumcised in order to become Christians.* The council does not seem to assert,

lay nothing upon you, but (what we think, at present, necessary) to abstain from meats offered to idols, which will be thought a kind of spiritual fornication; and from the use of blood; from which if you keep yourselves, you will avoid giving offence. Fare you well."

- 30.31.32. This decree being read to the church of Antioch, occasioned great joy, to which Judas and Silas contributed not a little; confirming, by their own private exhortations, the authority of the church of
33.34.35. Jerusalem.—Some time after, Judas returned again into Judea; but Silas chose to stay longer at Antioch, where Paul also and Barnabas continued, with many others; all uniting in the great work of preaching the gospel,

36. Paul, having now been a considerable time at Antioch, proposed to Barnabas to make another circuit among the several churches which they had esta-

that the Holy Ghost *immediately directed this decree*. If it had, there would have been no occasion for any reasoning about the matter.—*These necessary things*, says the text. In some copies we have a different reading; which may be rendered, *these things which are, at this time, necessary*.

29. It is worth while to compare the mildness of the conclusion of this decree, (*from which if you keep yourselves ye shall do well. Fare ye well*;) with the anathemas which used commonly to conclude the decrees of popes and councils.

32. Judas and Silas are here called *prophets*. The word *προφῆτης* sometimes signifies a person *who speaks for another*; as a teacher in an assembly may be called a prophet; or as Aaron was called Moses's prophet. It is not clear in what sense Judas and Silas are here called *prophets*: but it seems rather probable that they are called so, as speaking the sense of the church at Jerusalem,

blished.

blished. Barnabas, closing with the proposal, mentioned Mark, as a proper person to take with them; to which Paul objected, as he had left them so abruptly at Pamphylia. This drew on so sharp a contention between these two apostles, that they separated. Barnabas taking Mark, who was his nephew †, embarked for Cyprus; while Paul, accompanied by Silas, and attended by the prayers of the church, took the circuit he had proposed, through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

38.

39.

40. 41.

CHAP.
XVI.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

At Lystra he found a young convert of eminent piety, of the name of Timothy, whose mother was a Jewish Christian: and thinking him a proper person to be the companion of his labours, he complied so far with the prejudices of the Jews in those parts, as to circumcise him; for they all knew that his father

38. See chap. xiii. 13.

39. Here is an eminent example of imperfection in these great apostles. Mark had probably been much to blame in leaving Paul; and Paul perhaps now as much in resenting it so strongly: and both he and Barnabas in proceeding to a formal quarrel. They discovered plainly, as they had told the people of Lystra, that *they were men of like passions with themselves*. Paul, however, was afterwards perfectly reconciled to Mark: and speaks of him as one of his great comforts in his labours. See Col. iv. 11.

† See Col. iv. 10.

3. Though it is evident enough that Paul did not circumcise Timothy from any religious principle, but merely in compliance with the prejudices of the Jews; yet it must be owned, there was something rather singular in his doing it just at that critical time, when he himself was carrying a decree against circumcision. The fact seems to be, that circumcision was generally allowed to Jews. Timothy was circumcised, because his mother was of Jewish extraction: but the same apostle who allowed this, forbade Titus to conform to this ceremony because he was a Greek. Indeed none of the apostles seem to have had any objection to circumcision in *itself*: but only as it was imposed under the idea of being

father was a Greek. Having added this young convert to his company, Paul proceeded to the several cities which he meant to visit; and removed their scruples, by giving them copies of the decree which the apostolic assembly had made at Jerusalem.

6. 7. Having passed through several parts of Asia, where the gospel had already been planted, he determined to go into some other provinces, where it
 8. had not yet been preached: but in this design he was over-ruled by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and
 9. 10. 11. went to Troas.—Here he was directed, by a vision
 12. from heaven, to visit Macedonia; and accordingly he and his companions, of whom Luke was one, took the nearest way to Philippi, the chief city of
 13. that part of the country.—At Philippi, the Jews were allowed a place of worship at a little distance from the city, near the side of a river. Here, there-

necessary to salvation. And Paul does no more here than what he approves elsewhere: *to the Jews became I a Jew, that I might gain the Jews.* 1 Cor. ix. 20.

4. It is a good observation of L'Enfant, that the word *δογμα*, which is here translated a *decree*, always signifies something temporary and ceremonial, and not of perpetual obligation.—Lord Barrington (in his *Miscell. fac.*) supposes that the text is here disturbed; and that this verse and the next should be added to the last of the xvth chapter. This is certainly a more natural order, and introduces the account of Timothy more easily.

6. 7. It does not absolutely appear from the text, that the gospel had not been preached in Asia and Bithinia; though it seems probable, the people of those countries might not be yet prepared for it; or there might be other reasons why Macedonia was at this time preferable.

10. In this verse St. Luke first alludes to himself. But of whatever use he might be in these journeys to the Christian cause, he passes all over in modest silence.

13. Dr. Lardner shews, that it was very usual for the Jews, in foreign countries, to have houses of prayer allowed by the sides of rivers, or on the sea-shore. See his *Credib.* part i. ch. iii.

fore,

fore, Paul resorted on the sabbath-day, and found chiefly religious women; among whom one Lydia, 14. 15. a Jewish proselyte, a dealer in purple, being convinced by Paul's arguments, was baptized with all her family; and entreated him and his company to lodge at her house.

There was, at that time, at Philippi, a young 16. woman, possessed with an evil spirit, who afforded gain, by her divinations, to some people who employed her. This demoniac followed Paul and his 17. company, as they went to the synagogue, crying out, These are the servants of the most high God, who shew us the way of salvation. On this, Paul 18. ordering the evil spirit to leave her, she was perfectly restored.—Her employers thus finding the 19. 20. 21. hopes of all farther gain disappointed, seized Paul and Silas, and dragging them before the magistrates, accused them of disturbing the peace of the city, and of introducing new rites and customs, which were contrary to those already established. The tu- 22. 23. 24. mult increasing, the magistrates ordered them to be scourged, and thrown into prison, with a strict command to the jailor to keep them safely.—But 25. at midnight, as Paul and Silas were singing praises

17. The demoniacs, during the life of our blessed Saviour, always acknowledged his power—on what principle we are unacquainted—perhaps through flattery. See Mar. i. 24. 34. Luke iv. 34. Acts xix. 15.

23. This, and another instance at Ephesus (chap. xix.) are the only instances of persecution which St. Paul suffered from *the heathen*; and both were on interested, rather than on religious motives.

26. to God, an earthquake suddenly shook the foundations of the prison, and burst open all the gates.
27. —The keeper, awakened by the noise, and finding all laid open, took it for granted the prisoners were fled; and drawing his sword, was going to kill
28. himself; when Paul, seeing his frantic action, with a loud voice cried out, Do yourself no harm; we
29. are all here. On this, the keeper, calling for a light, was struck with the composure of Paul and Silas, in the midst of this terrible convulsion; and comparing the greatness of their behaviour with the miracle of the demoniac, he was convinced of their
30. divine power; and falling down before them, he brought them into his house, and asked them, with
31. 32. great emotion, What he should do to be saved? The apostle, explaining the terms of the gospel,
33. 34. held out to him a belief in Jesus Christ.—The keeper then washing their stripes, and refreshing them, received baptism himself, with his whole family, who all joined in praising God for his gracious mercies to them.
35. The next day, the magistrates, somewhat ashamed of their hasty proceedings, sent to the keeper of the prison to dismiss the two men who had been committed to his charge. This message the keeper,
36. with much joy, imparted to the apostles. But Paul,
37. with great spirit, said, they were Roman citizens, and had been used in a manner in which no Roman citizen ought to be used. What, said he, shall they beat and imprison us uncondemned; and then privately

vately dismiss us? Let them come themselves, and make an apology for what they have done.—The magistrates, on hearing they were Roman citizens, were much alarmed; and coming to the prison, entreated them quietly to leave the city.—They stayed, however, some little time at the house of Lydia, comforting their friends; and then leaving Philippi, went through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, to Thessalonica, the principal city of Macedonia.

38.

39.

40.

CHAP.
XVII.

1.

At Thessalonica also the Jews were allowed a synagogue, in which Paul, during three sabbath-days, explained the principles of the Christian religion; proving, from the prophecies of the Old Testament, that *that* Jesus whom he preached, having both suffered and risen from the dead, must needs be the Christ, whom those prophecies pointed out. This doctrine had such effect, that a great multitude of Greeks, and many of the Jews also believed.—But the success of the apostles soon raised a party of unbelieving Jews against them; who, getting together a number of disorderly people, attacked the house of Jason, where they lodged; and not being able to find the apostles, who had escaped, they carried Jason, and some other Christians whom they met with, before the magistrates, and informed them of the great irregularities which these people had committed in other places, as well as at Thessalonica; setting up, as they said, in opposition to the Roman authority, a certain king of the name of Jesus.

2. 3.

4.

5.

6. 7.

8. Jesus. They then laid an information against Jason for harbouring such seditious persons. This violent charge put the magistrates under some difficulty. They saw the frivolousness of it; at the same time,
9. they could not entirely neglect it. So they took security of Jason and of the others, and dismissed them.
10. Paul and Silas, in the mean time, had been sent privately to Berea; where, with the same freedom which they had used at Thessalonica, they went into
11. the Jewish synagogue and preached. Here the Jews were much better disposed than at Thessalonica; for they were at the pains of searching the scriptures, and comparing them with the doctrines
12. which Paul preached. Many of them, after this examination, believed; and many Greeks, likewise, of both sexes.
13. But when the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica had heard of the ready acceptance which the Bereans had given to the gospel, they came to Berea, and excited the people there also against the apostles.
14. 15. As Paul was the most obnoxious person, he thought it prudent to avoid their fury; and going to the sea-side, as if he had intended to embark, he went to Athens, sending orders to Silas and Timothy to follow him.

13. The word *σαλευω* which is translated *stirred up*, expresses properly that kind of agitated motion which is given to the sea in a storm; and admirably describes the raging of a popular tumult.

While

While he waited at Athens for his companions, 16.
 he was grieved to see a city, so celebrated for learn-
 ing, addicted, in so gross a manner, to idolatry.
 He took every opportunity, therefore, of reasoning 17.
 both with the Jews in their synagogues, and with
 the Athenians whom he accidentally met in public
 places.—As Athens was, at that time, the school 18.19.20.
 of philosophy, the apostle began soon to excite at-^{21.}
 tention; and some Epicurean and Stoic philoso-
 phers, partly in contempt, and partly through cu-
 riosity, (for the Athenians were a very inquisitive
 people,) brought him into their public assemblies,
 and desired to know what that new and uncom-
 monly strange doctrine was which he had advanced?
 alluding to what Paul had said with regard to the
 resurrection.

On this opening, Paul began by telling them how 22. 23.
 much he thought their minds under the influence
 of

16. Petronius, who lived about the time of St. Paul, says, that
 at Athens, *Facilius possis Deum quam hominem, invenire.*

21. This character is given of the Athenians both by De-
 mosthenes and Thucydides.

22. Dr. Lardner contends, and I think with great justice, that
δυσδαίμονιστος should be taken in a good sense, and not rendered
superstitious. (See Credib. vol. i. p. 193. in a note.) St. Paul
 shewed, at all times, great delicacy towards the opinions of others;
 and plainly at this time did not mean to give any offence to the
 Athenians.

23. Diogenes Laertius, in his life of Epimenides (lib. i. p. 29.)
 tells us, that the Athenians, being afflicted with a pestilence, in-
 vited Epimenides to lustrate their city. The method he took,
 was to carry several sheep to the Areopagus; from whence they
 were left to wander as they pleased, under the observation of
 people sent to attend them. As each sheep lay down, it was sa-
 crificed

- of a strong sense of religion. Not content, said he, with the variety of Gods you worship, I met with an altar inscribed TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. This proves, however, that there is a God, whom,
24. you allow, you do not know. That God I now preach unto you—the Creator of all things—the Lord of heaven and earth—who is not confined to
25. human temples—nor in want of sacrifice, or any thing which human power can supply; inasmuch as every thing derives its existence and preservation
26. from him. This great God is the common father of all mankind; whose several nations he hath distributed over the face of the earth, according to
27. his own good pleasure; and hath required them all
28. to acknowledge and worship him, from a just sense of their dependence on him, for every blessing they enjoy—their life—their breath—and very existence.
29. The apostle then quoted a passage from Aratus, in which that poet calls mankind *the offspring of God*. If, continued he, we are the offspring of God, let

sacrificed on the spot, *to the propitious God*. By this ceremony the city was relieved. But it was still unknown what God was propitious. An altar, therefore, was erected at every place where a sheep had been sacrificed, *to the unknown God*.

23. With what great address the apostle turns the superstition of the Athenians against themselves!—He also makes an admirable apology for himself. He had been accused of setting forth strange Gods—to which charge he answers, that he found *among them* an altar inscribed *to the unknown God*.—Longinus, in a fragment, mentions Paul of Tarsus, among the orators of his time. See Jortin's Sermon. vol. iv. p. 221.

28. Aratus was a Cilician poet, the countryman of Paul. Nearly the same expression is found in Cleanthes's hymn to Jupiter. See Hen. Step. Poet. Philos. p. 49.

us consider in what light we are called so. It is in our minds, not in our bodies, that we resemble him. We must not, therefore, think that images of gold and silver are any representations of the deity.—

Thus far, however, God hath borne with the ignorance of mankind. But now he hath revealed his will to them explicitly; and commands them every where to repent, and prepare themselves for that awful time, when he will call them all into judgment before Jesus Christ, the redeemer of the world; of whose divine authority he gave sufficient evidence, by raising him from the dead.

This discourse, especially the latter part of it, with regard to the resurrection of the dead, affected this assembly of philosophers in different ways. The Epicureans treated it with great contempt: while the Stoics, thinking there was something plausible in the notion, desired they might hear the apostle on the same subject again.—Before he left Athens, however, he made many converts; among whom were some people of consequence; particularly Dionysius, one of the members of the council.

From Athens Paul went to Corinth: and finding there a Christian Jew, of the name of Aquila, who had been driven from Rome, with all his countrymen, by a decree of the emperor Claudius; he abode

30.

31.

32.

33-34

CHAP.
XVIII.

1. 2.

3.

2. Suetonius tells us, in the life of Claudius, that that Emperor, *Judeos, impulsore Christo, assidue tumultuantes, Roma expulit.*

- with him : and as Aquila and he were both tent-makers, they wrought together. On the sabbath-day Paul taught in the synagogue, applying himself chiefly to the Jews and proselytes.—Afterwards, when Silas and Timothy joined him from Macedonia, they all united in the most earnest application to the Jews ; endeavouring to convince them, from the prophets, that Jesus was certainly the Messiah.
6. — But their zealous endeavours were received with so hardened an opposition, that Paul, finding it to no purpose to continue among them, gathered up his garment, and shaking it out, accompanied that significant action by telling them, he now gave them up—they must take their guilt upon themselves—he would turn to the Gentiles. And from this time he preached no more in the synagogue, but in the house of one Justus, who lived near it.—Notwithstanding, however, this violent opposition, Crispus, the

3. It may appear a little singular, that Paul, who was brought up in a learned profession, should be a tent-maker : but we must consider, that the Jews of all conditions taught their children some mechanic business. It was a common saying among them, *that he who taught his son no business, bred him a thief*.—The same custom still prevails in the east. Even the Grand Seignior himself is always taught some mechanic art. Sir Paul Ricaut tells us, that the Grand Seignior, to whom he went ambassador, had learned to make wooden spoons.

6. It is rendered in our translation, *he shook his raiment* ; which implies a degree of passion and violence unbecoming the apostolical character. I have given it another interpretation, led by the word *ἐκτινασσω*, which literally signifies, *to shake from, or shake out of*. The action seems to be merely symbolical, and by no means passionate. The story of the Roman ambassador, who *shook war from his gown*, will be remembered.

chief

chief ruler of the synagogue, believed, and a great number of Corinthians.

As Paul was now about to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and must therefore expect to irritate the Jews still more, it pleased God to give him the comfort of a heavenly vision, in which he was ordered to continue where he was, amidst a well-disposed people—to preach the truth boldly—and to trust in the protection of heaven.—On the authority of this vision, Paul continued a year and a half longer at Corinth, preaching the gospel; and met with no opposition, till Gallio was appointed proconsul of Achaia; whom the Jews hoped to interest in their favour. With this view, they brought Paul before him in a tumultuary manner, accusing him of introducing a new mode of worship. But Gallio, immediately comprehending the whole affair, told the Jews plainly, that if it were a matter of right and wrong, he would readily enter into it: but as he saw it was a question with regard to ceremonies and points of religion, of which he was no judge, he gave them to understand, he should never trouble himself about such matters; and ordered them immediately to leave the court.—Emboldened by this, the Greeks, who favoured Paul, took Soft-
henes,

12. It is remarkable, that Gallio was the brother of the philosopher Seneca, and is described by him as a man of the sweetest disposition. Statius mentions him also in the same amiable light.

17. They beat him perhaps not in the court room, but as he left it.—It is however rather doubtful, whether Softhenes was not St. Paul's friend: see 1 Cor. i. 1. The relation is accom-

henes, one of the rulers of the synagogue, who had been the chief mover in the affair, and beat him on the spot: while Gallio, thinking probably it was a punishment he well deserved, took no notice of the impropriety of the action.

18. After this, Paul continued some time longer at Corinth; and then went into Syria, accompanied by Aquila and his wife Priscilla, having first shaven his head at Cenchrea, as a testimony that he had finished a vow in which he had engaged.

19. 20. 21. At Ephesus he found a synagogue, where he preached; and was so well received by the Jews there, that he was much pressed to stay longer: but he thought himself under a necessity to keep the ensuing feast at Jerusalem. He left, however,

22. Aquila and Priscilla with them till his return; and then embarking at Ephesus, he landed at Cæsarea, and went to Jerusalem, where he had a conference

23. with the apostles; and from thence went to Antioch in Syria.—There he spent some time; and then

panied with so few circumstances, that it is difficult to collect the real fact. There is a various reading which places *οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι* in the room of *οἱ Ἕλληνες*. If this should be the true one, it gives a different sense to the passage.

18. Some imagine this to have been a Nazarite vow; and yet it does not correspond with the Levitical institution, which required the Nazarite to *shave his head at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*. Num. vi. 18.—It is commonly thought to have been a vow for some signal deliverance.

19. Ephesus was the principal city of proconsular Asia. It stood on the side of a hill, overlooking a beautiful and very extensive plain, watered by the river Caister.

21. Not from any principle of conscience, but probably because he might meet at Jerusalem a great concourse of Jews, and many of his own converts.

visited

visited the several churches of Galatia and Phrygia, exhorting the new converts to continue steadily in the faith they had professed.

After Paul had left Ephesus, an Alexandrian Jew ^{24.25.26.} arrived there, named Apollos, who had been a disciple of John the Baptist. He was an eloquent man, well versed in the Hebrew scriptures; and preached the gospel, from such knowledge as he had, with great earnestness. Aquila and Priscilla having heard him, and finding him not fully informed in the doctrines of the gospel, instructed him more perfectly. Afterwards, when he wished to preach the gospel in ^{27.28.} Achaia, the Ephesian church gave him letters of recommendation to the Christians there. In all that country his services were very eminent; for his eloquence and knowledge in the scriptures were such, that he greatly convinced the Jews, from the prophetic writings, that Jesus was the Messiah.

CHAP.
XIX.

In the mean time, Paul returned to Ephesus, as he had promised. Here he found some more of the disciples of John; and asked them, Whether they had received the Holy Ghost? To this they answered, they had heard of nothing particular on that subject. He then asked them, Whether they had been ^{3.} baptized in the Christian faith? and was informed

2. It need not be supposed they had never heard of the Holy Ghost, which their answer seems to imply; but having lived probably in some remote part, they had not heard of the late effusions and gifts of the Holy Ghost. They might know only what John had occasionally said on that subject: see Matt. iii. 11.—Mark i. 8.—John i. 33.

4. they had received no baptism but that of John. Paul then told them, that John's baptism engaged men only to repentance, till the appearing of the Messiah; but on that event, it was expected they should immediately be baptized into the Christian faith.—
5. On this, they were baptized in the name of Jesus
6. Christ; and Paul laying his hands on them, they
7. received the Holy Ghost, with its miraculous accompaniments of the spirit of prophecy and speaking with tongues. The number of these disciples was about twelve.
8. Paul, on his second visit to Ephesus, continued preaching freely in the synagogue about three
9. months. But the Jews raising a violent party against him there, as they had done at Corinth, he separated himself and his company from them; and preached afterwards in the school of one Tyrannus.
10. He continued, however, at Ephesus, about two years longer, and had wonderful success, both among the
11. Asiatic Jews and the Gentiles; being enabled to perform miracles in a very extraordinary manner.
12. He not only cured diseases by speaking a word; but even by sending garments to sick and possessed people.
13. These miracles greatly raised the envy of the Jewish exorcists; who, seeing Paul perform them in the name of Jesus, made an effort to perform them
14. in the same manner. Seven sons particularly of

13. See note on Matt. xii. 26.

Sceva, one of the chief priests, made the attempt. 15.
 But the possessed man cried out, Jesus I know, and
 Paul I know; but who are you? On this, he made 16.
 a furious attack upon them; and having terrified
 and wounded them, put them all to flight. This 17.
 shewed the power of the apostles over evil spirits
 so very eminently superior to that of the exorcists,
 that it drew over great multitudes to adore the 18.19.20.
 name of Jesus. Nay, it had such an effect upon
 people in general, that numbers who had practised
 magical arts came to the apostles, confessed their
 wicked impostures, and bringing their mischievous
 books, burnt them publicly, though their value was
 very considerable.

Paul having thus settled a church at Ephesus, 21.
 resolved now, under the influence of the Spirit, to
 go through Macedonia and Achaia to Jerusalem, and
 from thence to Rome. He sent Timothy, therefore, 22.
 and Erastus before him into Macedonia, to make
 some proper dispositions; and himself staid a while
 longer at Ephesus.

During this interval, a violent commotion was 23.
 stirred up against him.—In that city lived a cer- 24.25.26.
 tain artisan, named Demetrius, whose principal 27.

19. Books were much more valuable before the invention of printing; and these might have been rendered more so by the many curious figures and diagrams which they might contain. If the pieces of silver were shekels at 2s. 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. each, the value would be about 5900*l.* If they were denarii, at 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each, the value would be about 1600*l.*

- occupation it was to make silver ornaments, used in the worship of Diana; by which himself and many other craftsmen were enriched. This person, calling together such as wrought in the same business, reminded them of the profit they had acquired by an employment now likely to be at an end, if Paul's doctrine against image-worship should be universally received. Of this, he told them, there was a great likelihood, from the attention that had been paid to it, not only in that city, but in the greatest part of Asia. He bad them also consider, that not only their livelihood, but their religion
28. itself was in danger.—This language threw the whole body of artisans into a ferment; and nothing was heard from every part of the crowd, but voices crying out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!—
29. The day on which Demetrius had contrived this tumult, was the great festival-day of the goddess, when games were celebrated to her honour in the theatre. This set numbers of idle people at liberty; who, being violently instigated against Paul, and not finding him, seized Gaius and Aristarchus, two Macedonian converts, who had been seen with him, and hurried them into the theatre, with a view, probably, if they had been suffered, of throwing
30. them to the wild beasts.—Paul, hearing of this

24. These *silver shrines* are supposed to have been small temples, with the goddess in miniature, enshrined; which the devotees of Diana used to set up, as private objects of worship, in their houses. Some suppose them to have been medals.

violence, was very desirous to enter the theatre,
 with an intention, if possible, to assuage the people :
 but neither the disciples, nor the principal magis- 31.
 trates, who were his friends, would suffer him.
 In the mean time the tumult increased; and num- 32.
 bers had now joined it, who did not even know
 the cause of the disturbance, some crying one thing,
 and some another.—At this period of the tumult, 33.
 the Jewish inhabitants of Ephesus, finding the mul-
 titude so divided in their aim; and fearing lest
 they too should suffer as Christians, drew Alexander
 through the crowd, with a view that he should
 explain that matter to the people. He stood up,
 therefore, and beckoning with his hand, would have
 addressed them. But they, finding he was a Jew, 34.
 would not suffer him to speak; drowning his voice
 with one general cry, from every part of the assem-
 bly, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! —In this 35.
 situation of things, one of the magistrates rushed
 into the assembly; and by his presence reducing it
 a little to order, thus spoke.—“ Is there any

31. These magistrates, in the original, are styled *Ἀσιαρχοί*, *chief men of Asia*; and it is from this expression that some have supposed the public games were now celebrating, which seems very probable; and that these *Ἀσιαρχοί* were deputies from the several cities of Asia, who presided over them.

33. The interpretation here given of this passage seems to be the most probable one. This Alexander was perhaps the same mentioned 2 Tim. iv. 14. See a note there.

34. There cannot be a finer description, in so few words, of a popular tumult, than St. Luke has given us here.

35. It is not well agreed what magistrate is meant here; but it is generally supposed he was the officer who presided in chief over the public games.

- one, said he, who is ignorant of the high veneration in which this city holds the great goddess Diana, and her image, which is the undoubted offspring
36. of Jupiter? As these things, therefore, are known to all the world, it is unnecessary to defend them. Let me advise you, therefore, in this matter, to
37. do nothing rashly. These two men, whom you have dragged into the theatre, have neither been
38. guilty of sacrilege nor of blasphemy. If Demetrius, therefore, and the people of his company have any thing to allege against them, they may carry the affair, in a regular way, before the proconsul, where
39. it will be properly determined: or if it relate to any matter not cognizable in the Roman courts,
40. let it be determined in a lawful assembly. But as for this day's tumult and uproar, for which no reason can be given, it may very probably draw upon us
41. the resentment of the Romans."——This judicious speech had its effect; and the tumult instantly sub-

CHAP. fided.

XX.

- Soon after, Paul, calling the disciples together,
1. took a formal leave of them; and followed Timothy and Erastus, as he had intended, into Macedonia.
2. Here he spent some time in exhorting the several churches, and then pursued his journey into Achaia,
3. where he continued three months. From hence he purposed to go by sea into Syria; but hearing that the Jews intended to way-lay him, he changed his design, and went by land through Macedonia.——
4. 5. In the mean time, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus,
- Gaius,

Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus, his companions, went by sea, and waited for him at Troas; while he took ship at Philippi in Macedonia; 6. and having crossed the Egean sea, came to them, and continued a few days at Troas.

On the first day of the week before his departure, 7. he assembled all the Christians of those parts, with a view to settle their opinions, and answer any objections they might make. Their meeting was in 8. 9. an upper room, where many lights were burning; and as Paul had prejudices of different kinds to remove, he continued the assembly to a late hour. In the mean time, a young man of the name of Eutychus, being not much interested in what passed, fell asleep on a window, and dropped down, on the outside of the house, to the ground, where he was taken up dead. But Paul immediately going down, 10. raised him again to life, and presented him to his friends in perfect health. This was not only a great 11. joy to all who were immediately connected with him; but was a present miracle to confirm the faith of such as wavered. — As day-light came on, Paul 12.

7. The word *διαλεγομαι* signifies sometimes to *dispute* and *question*, as in Mark ix. 33, and Jude 9, and in Acts xxiv. 12. where St. Paul particularly uses it in that sense. It is more probable therefore that it has this meaning here, than that Paul should continue a set discourse during so many hours.

8. It is supposed by some interpreters, that as these nocturnal meetings were become matter of objection to Christians, Paul chose to have the room well lighted, that people might see from the street what passed. No other reason can well be suggested for our being told, *there were many lights burning*.

- administered the holy sacrament to all the assembly ;
13. and then, taking his leave, proceeded on his journey by land to Assos, where his companions met
14. 15. him by sea. There embarking, he sailed past the islands of Mytelene, Chios, and Samos, and landing at Trogyllium, continued his course the next day to Miletus, which is a few miles south of Ephesus.
16. He would not, however, visit that city, as he feared he might be delayed, and was desirous of keeping
17. the feast of pentecost at Jerusalem. But as he might not have another opportunity of visiting the Ephesian church, he sent for the elders of it to meet him at Miletus.
18. 19. Here he reminded them of the laborious life he had led ever since his first coming to Ephesus ; and of the many difficulties and dangers he had
20. encountered among the Jews. He reminded them,

12. It is not well determined, whether a common meal is here meant, or the celebration of the eucharist ; the same phrase being often used for both. Considering the solemnity of the occasion, commentators are inclined to the latter interpretation : especially as the meeting is introduced with that idea in the 7th verse, where we are told *the disciples came together to break bread*.—Justin Martyr, who wrote only about forty years after St. John's death, speaking of the manner of celebrating Sunday among the Christians of his day, says, " that on Sunday the Christians both of the city and country meet together, because that is the day of our Lord's resurrection. The writings of the prophets and apostles are first read to us. Then the minister exhorts us to imitate what we have heard. We join next in prayer ; and lastly receive the sacrament, when they, who are able, give alms." *Apol. ii. p. 98.*—Pliny's account of the Christian sabbath, written a few years before, is nearly the same. " They assemble, says he, speaking of the Christians, on a set day, before it is light, and bind themselves by a sacrament to do nothing bad." *Lib. x. ep. 97.*

also,

also, of the faithful discharge of his ministry, both publicly and privately—the subject of which had ever been; that repentance and faith were the only means of salvation, both to Jew and Gentile.—
 And now, said he, I am under the direction of the Spirit, on my journey to Jerusalem; not knowing what it may please God to lay upon me: only this I know, that dangers and difficulties, in some shape, await me.—But these are not the things which give me pain; if I can only finish my course with joy, and the ministry which God hath entrusted to me.—Of this, however, I am persuaded, that you shall see my face no more. I take the present opportunity, therefore, of testifying to you, that if any man swerve from the truth, I am blameless—I have opened to you the whole counsel of God.—Be you equally attentive, both to your own behaviour, and to the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood, and which the Holy Ghost hath committed to your care.—Many enemies, after my departure, will rise up against it. Many enemies, even among yourselves, shall arise, to seduce you from the truth. Be, therefore, on your guard; and remember the various cautions which, during three years, I have given you on this head.—With these instructions, I recommend you to

25. The word *oída* often signifies only *belief*.

28. This very remarkable expression, *the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*, I think cannot easily be evaded by those who deny the divinity of Christ.

- the grace of God; which, with your own sincere
33. endeavours, will perfect you in all holiness. — For myself, you will bear me witness, that I have not
34. preached the gospel among you through any interested motives. You all know that these hands
35. have ministered, not only to my own necessities, but to those of others: and thus, also, I have instructed my fellow-labourers; always remembering the words of our Lord, *that it is more blessed to*
36. *give than to receive.* — After Paul had made this affectionate address, they all joined with him in
37. 38. prayer; and then accompanied him to the ship with many tears and sorrowful embraces; grieving, above
- CHAP. all things, at his saying they should see his face
- XXI. again no more.

1. Having thus parted with the elders of the church of Ephesus, Paul and his company embarked again; and holding their course along the islands of Cos and Rhodes, they landed at Patara, on the south of
2. 3. Asia Minor. Here they found a ship bound to Phœnicia, in which they took their passage to Tyre.
4. — At this city they met with several disciples, who, under the influence of the Spirit, exhorted them
5. 6. much against going to Jerusalem. But Paul, per-

34. See 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12, where St. Paul speaks of its being his constant practice to labour for his maintenance.

35. These words of our blessed Saviour are not recorded by any of the evangelists; but as, without doubt, St. Paul had them on good authority, they must be considered as making a part of the evangelical history. — The giver is *supposed* here, to have a good motive in giving; on which the blessedness of giving, as far as relates to himself, depends.

sisting in his resolution, they followed him, with their wives and children, a mournful company, to the shore; where, after prayer, Paul and his friends embarked, and continued their course to Ptolemais. 7.
 —Here spending a day with the disciples of that place, they proceeded to Cæsarea, where they lodged with Philip, one of the seven deacons. This holy man had four unmarried daughters, whom God had endowed with the spirit of prophecy. 8. 9.

While they continued here, the prophet Agabas came from Judea; and taking Paul's girdle, tied it about his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the spirit of God; the Jews at Jerusalem shall in this manner treat the man to whom this girdle belongeth, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles. 10. 11.
 —This gave both Paul's companions, and the disciples at Cæsarea, great uneasiness. But notwithstanding all their entreaty, Paul held his resolution, saying, What mean you to weep and to break mine heart? I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die also, for the sake of the gospel.—When they found it was in vain to persist, they submitted, saying, The will of the Lord be done!—Paul, therefore, set out for Jerusalem, accompanied by 12. 13. 14. 15. 16.

7. Ptolemais took afterwards, in Turkish times, the name of Acra; and was the object of great contention during the holy wars. It is now, Maundrel tells us, a heap of ruins.

8. We are told Acts viii. 40, that Philip lived at Cæsarea.

10. The same who foretold the famine. Acts xi. 28.

15. Our *carriages*, should be translated our *baggage*. It is used in that sense in Xenophon's *anabasis*—Επει ηρισιντας συσκευασµατος επορευντο. Oxf. edit. p. 344. *After they had dined, they moved on with the baggage.* The word frequently occurs in Xenophon.

some of the disciples of Cæsarea, who brought us to the house of an old disciple at Jerusalem, one Mnason, a Cyprian, where it was intended we should lodge.

17. On our arrival at Jerusalem, we were kindly re-
 18. ceived by the brethren : and the next day Paul went
 19. to James, and the rest of the apostles, and gave
 20. them a full account of his ministry among the Gen-
 tiles. On this they all glorified God.—They
 again, on their part, informed him of the state of
 the gospel at that time at Jerusalem—that it had
 increased exceedingly ; but that the zealous Jews
 who had embraced it, could not be induced to give
 21. up the necessity of observing the Mosaic law. They
 told him farther, that it was believed by all the
 Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, that nobody had
 more opposed the retaining of the Jewish ceremonies
 22.23.24. among the Gentiles, than he had done. Something,

21. This passage plainly shews, that one of the chief subjects of St. Paul's discourses to the Jews, was the insufficiency of the Mosaic law in obtaining salvation. This was the doctrine which had chiefly irritated the Jews against him ; and had induced the apostolical college to consult his safety by advising him to conform to the ceremonies of the Nazarite vow. — As the *inefficacy* of the Jewish law, therefore, particularly of circumcision, and its other rites, were so much the subjects of his preaching, we may conclude also they were equally the subjects of his writings ; and that many passages in his epistles, which seem to speak of *faith* in opposition to *works*, must be explained by this key. St. Paul might have preached as much as he had pleased about *faith and works*, as that doctrine is sometimes explained, and would have given no offence at all to the Jews. As therefore the apostle's doctrine about faith and works did give great offence to them, we conclude it could not be a doctrine which was no way calculated to offend them, but rather a doctrine which we know from the first had always given them offence.

therefore,

therefore, they thought, of a conciliatory nature was necessary. They proceeded to inform him; there were, at that time, among them four persons, who were then under a Nazarite vow, which was to expire in seven days; and proposed to Paul, that he himself should take the same vow upon him for the same term, and be at the expence of proper sacrifices, and shave his head; by which compliance, in an indifferent matter, he might convince the Jews that their prejudices against him were ill-grounded. Nor could this at all affect the Gentiles, as the late decree at Jerusalem had made them perfectly easy. . 25.

This advice Paul followed; and the next day presented himself in the temple; signifying his intention, after the accomplishment of seven days, to offer the sacrifices which the law required.—But before the 26. 27. 28.

24. There is something very beautiful and exemplary in the behaviour of these great apostles on this occasion. No rigour appears in trifling matters; but a desire in all things lawful to accommodate themselves to the prejudices of others. It is plain from this passage, among many of the same kind, that the apostles had no scruples of conscience in conforming to the Jewish rites. All they contended for was, that they were not necessary to salvation.

24. It was reckoned among the Jews, very meritorious to contribute to the expences of those who had taken a Nazarite vow. Josephus tells us, that Herod Agrippa gained great credit by paying the expences of Nazarites; and Maimonides asserts, that he who did it partook of the merits of the vow.

25. The decree mentioned Acts xv.

26. It is not obvious why Paul should offer sacrifices: inasmuch as by respecting the type, he shewed disrespect to the archetype. All sacrifices, it is true, did not imply propitiation. But this evidently did. See Numb. vi. 14. All that can be said, I think, is, that Paul offered a sacrifice to complete his vow—so that by taking the vow, he bound himself to offer the sacrifice.

- seven days were expired, some of the Asiatic Jews, who had persecuted him in their own country, seeing him now in the temple, excited the people with violent outcries against him, as a man who had profaned the law and polluted the temple, by bringing
29. uncircumcised Greeks into it.—This last charge was founded on a groundless supposition, that he had carried Trophimus, an Ephesian, into the temple; whereas Paul and he had only been seen together in the city.
30. At these outcries, great numbers of people flocking together, were soon actuated by the spirit of their leaders. Paul was immediately assaulted, and dragged
- 31.32.33. out of the temple; and the enraged multitude would have put him instantly to death, if the Roman officer, who commanded in the castle of Antonia, had not issued out with a guard, and rescued him. Lyfias, for that was the officer's name, having ordered Paul to be secured, demanded what they had
34. to say against him? Not being able, however, to obtain any satisfactory answer, from the confused clamours of the multitude, he commanded him to

32. Josephus describes this castle as having four towers, from one of which it overlooked the temple, and was therefore a great check upon it; for the soldiers could descend by a flight of stairs, on any alarm, into the portico of the temple, with which the castle was connected. It was repaired by Herod, who gave it the name of Antonia in honour of Anthony.

33. *Bound with two chains.* A capital offender among the Romans was secured by being fastened to two soldiers. See the same manner of securing mentioned Acts xii. 6. For small offences the prisoner was secured by a single soldier. See Acts xxviii. 16.

be carried up to the castle. But the crowd was 35. 36.
 so violent and daring, that the soldiers were scarce
 able to carry him up the stairs.—In this situation, 37.
 Paul, addressing himself to the Roman officer, de-
 fired to speak a few words to him. Lyfias, sur-
 prised at his speaking the Greek language, asked
 him, If he was not that Egyptian, who, a few years 38.
 before, had headed a band of four thousand ruf- 39.
 fians? Paul assured him he was not; but that he
 was a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia; and begged he might
 be permitted to speak to the people. The Roman 40.
 officer giving him leave, Paul stood on the stairs of
 the castle; and having, by waving his hand, ob- CHAP.
 tained silence, addressed them in the Hebrew tongue, XXII.
 which still the more engaged their attention. 1. 2.

He began his defence by assuring them he was a 3.
 Jew; and though a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, had
 been educated in Jerusalem, under their celebrated
 rabbi Gamaliel; by whom he had been instructed in

38. Josephus gives the following account of this Egyptian:—
 that he got together a tumultuary army, whom he persuaded to
 believe, that he would miraculously take Jerusalem, as Jericho
 had formerly been taken. With this view he led them to the
 Mount of Olives. But here they were attacked, and defeated
 by Felix, the Roman governor; who killed and took about six
 hundred of them, and put the rest to flight. Among the fugitives
 was the Egyptian himself, who not being afterwards heard of,
 was now supposed by Lyfias to have made another attempt. Jo-
 sephus gives an account of this Egyptian both in his Jewish war
 and in his antiquities, with some variation of circumstances, which
 Lardner (Credib. vol. i. p. 414.) endeavours to reconcile, and
 makes both them and St. Luke accord.—Lyfias's conceiving
 Paul to be this Egyptian gives a strong idea of the tumult.

3. *At the feet of Gamaliel*, says the text. This is not figurative,
 but relates to the manner in which scholars sat under the desks of
 their masters.

- the law, of which he had been as zealous a defender as any of them.—Nay, in the early part of his life, he had been the most determined adversary of that gospel which he now professed—and to this the high-priest and elders could bear witness, under whom he had acted in persecuting Christianity. He then laid before them the singular and miraculous event of his conversion; and entering into the circumstances of it, related in order his journey to Damascus—the divine vision which had been vouchsafed to him—the blindness with which he had been struck—and his restoration to sight at Damascus—mentioning the name of the person there who was instrumental in this wonderful recovery.—He then told them, this was not the only miraculous call he had had. In Jerusalem he had a revelation from heaven; by which he was forbidden to stay any longer there, as the Jews would not receive his testimony. To this divine injunction he ventured to reply, that the Jews could not doubt the truth and sincerity of his conversion, from his former severity to Christians; and particularly in the case of Stephen; which would make him, he thought, a proper person than any other, to convert those who lived on the spot, and were acquainted with all these circumstances.—But he was ordered by the heavenly voice to leave Jerusalem, and preach the gospel among the Gentiles—
22. 23. Thus far the people heard him patiently: but he had no sooner mentioned the Gentiles, than they broke out again into all the excesses of rage and violence;

violence; throwing off their clothes, casting dust into the air, and crying out, Away with him— Away with him: it is not fit that such a fellow should live.

The Roman officer, seeing the tumult renewed, 24.
and not being able to gather, from a Hebrew speech, what Paul had said or done, to excite such violence, ordered him to be carried into the castle, and to be examined with scourging. But as the 25.
soldiers were binding him, Paul asked a centurion who stood by, Whether it were lawful to scourge a Roman citizen yet uncondemned?—The cen- 26.
turion mentioning this to his commander, that offi- 27.
cer asked Paul, Whether the information he had 28.
received were true, that he was a Roman citizen? To this Paul answered in the affirmative. The officer still doubting his assertion, asked in what manner he had obtained his freedom? It is not a matter, continued he, easily obtained: it cost me a considerable sum. But Paul informed him that he

23. Throwing dust into the air, is still a mode of shewing contempt among the Arabians, particularly to criminals; as if they were fit only to be covered with earth.

28. Some learned critics have endeavoured to shew, that Tarsus never was among the Roman *municipia*. If so, Paul's father must have been a freedman, as many of the Jews were. But others say, Tarsus, which sided with the two first Cæars, obtained municipal privileges from one of these emperors.—Dr. Lardner quotes a passage from Dio to shew, that the chief captain might easily have purchased his freedom; for at this time the citizenship of Rome was become very cheap. Messalina had introduced the sale of it.

29. was free-born.—This put an immediate stop to the summary way intended of examining Paul; and the Roman officer was not a little apprehensive, on having gone so far. He resolved, therefore, to have him examined in another manner; and the next day sent to inform the high-priest and the council, that he would bring Paul down from the castle into the temple, where they might freely examine him, and set forth the ground of all this tumult.

CHAP.
XXIII.

1. Paul, thus produced before them, looked round the council with some attention; that, from a knowledge of the characters of the people who composed it, he might be able to procure a party in his favour. —He then began with solemnly protesting, that, however traduced he had been as a mover of sedition, his opinions had always led him to a dutiful submission to law and government—
2. The high-priest, incensed at this vindication of himself, ordered those who stood by to strike him on the face: on which Paul, with some warmth, cried out, God shall smite you for all your hypocritical

29. It is said, he was afraid, *because he had bound him*—that is, because he had bound him in the ignominious manner in which he had done for scourging. A Roman citizen might be bound for security; and it appears from the 30th verse that Paul was still in bonds.

1. *To a dutiful submission, &c.* As he had been accused of stirring up the people, this seems to be the most probable meaning of the passage.

3. The appellation of *whited wall* was probably in allusion to our Saviour's calling the hypocritical Pharisees, *whited sepulchres*: though

critical pretences. Do you sit here to judge me according to law, and command me to be smitten contrary to law?—This speech gave great offence 4. 5. to some of the bye-standers; and Paul thought it right to apologize for the warmth and impropriety of his behaviour; saying, the word of God enjoined him not to speak disrespectfully of the ruler of the people.

This interruption being over, Paul began again; 6. and having observed there were many Pharisees in the council, he said, he knew well that it was not for being a mover of sedition, that he was called in question; but for holding the opinion of the resurrection of the dead, which, as a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, he had always maintained.—This immediately produced a division in the assembly, which consisted of Pharisees and Sadducees; 7. the latter of whom denied the existence of a future 8. state. While these, therefore, thought Paul should 9.

though otherwise it was a very apposite appellative, as the high-priest, at least in exercising his functions, wore a *large white robe*.—This denunciation of God's wrath against this wicked high-priest, was fulfilled in the beginning of the Jewish war, about five years after. Josephus informs us, that in a tumult having hid himself in an old aqueduct, he was discovered, dragged out, and put to death. Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 17.

5. Paul thought it right to apologize. *I wist not*, seems to mean, *I did not consider*.—Or it may mean, he did not know him: for the high-priest might have been then in a common dress. He wore his pontifical robes only when he ministered in the temple; see Ezek. xlv. 19.—Or he might not know him for another reason. In fact, he was not the high-priest. He had been deposed, and his successor having been murdered, he officiated, in the vacancy, on his own authority. See Micha. c. xi. sec. 11.

29. was free-born.—This put an immediate stop to the summary way intended of examining Paul; and the Roman officer was not a little apprehensive, on having gone so far. He resolved, therefore, to have him examined in another manner; and the next day sent to inform the high-priest and the council, that he would bring Paul down from the castle into the temple, where they might freely examine him, and set forth the ground of all this tumult.

CHAP.
XXIII.

1. Paul, thus produced before them, looked round the council with some attention; that, from a knowledge of the characters of the people who composed it, he might be able to procure a party in his favour. —He then began with solemnly protesting, that, however traduced he had been as a mover of sedition, his opinions had always led him to a dutiful submission to law and government—
2. The high-priest, incensed at this vindication of himself, ordered those who stood by to strike him on the face: on which Paul, with some warmth, cried out, God shall smite you for all your hypocritical

29. It is said, he was afraid, *because he had bound him*—that is, because he had bound him in the ignominious manner in which he had done for scourging. A Roman citizen might be bound for security; and it appears from the 30th verse that Paul was still in bonds.

1. *To a dutiful submission, &c.* As he had been accused of stirring up the people, this seems to be the most probable meaning of the passage.

3. The appellation of *whited wall* was probably in allusion to our Saviour's calling the hypocritical Pharisees, *whited sepulchres*:
though

critical pretences. Do you sit here to judge me according to law, and command me to be smitten contrary to law?—This speech gave great offence 4. 5. to some of the bye-standers; and Paul thought it right to apologize for the warmth and impropriety of his behaviour; saying, the word of God enjoined him not to speak disrespectfully of the ruler of the people.

This interruption being over, Paul began again; 6. and having observed there were many Pharisees in the council, he said, he knew well that it was not for being a mover of sedition, that he was called in question; but for holding the opinion of the resurrection of the dead, which, as a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, he had always maintained.—This immediately produced a division in the assembly, which consisted of Pharisees and Sadducees; 7. the latter of whom denied the existence of a future 8. state. While these, therefore, thought Paul should 9.

though otherwise it was a very apposite appellative, as the high-priest, at least in exercising his functions, wore *a large white robe*. —This denunciation of God's wrath against this wicked high-priest, was fulfilled in the beginning of the Jewish war, about five years after. Josephus informs us, that in a tumult having hid himself in an old aqueduct, he was discovered, dragged out, and put to death. Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 17.

5. Paul thought it right to apologize. *I wist not*, seems to mean, *I did not consider*.—Or it may mean, he did not know him: for the high-priest might have been then in a common dress. He wore his pontifical robes only when he ministered in the temple; see Ezek. xliv. 19.—Or he might not know him for another reason. In fact, he was not the high-priest. He had been deposed, and his successor having been murdered, he officiated, in the vacancy, on his own authority. See Micha. c. xi. sec. 11.

be treated with every severity, the Pharisees declared they saw no fault in him : but if an angel from heaven had spoken to him in that wonderful account he had given of his conversion, they should beware of doing any thing in opposition to God.

10. —By degrees the dissension arose to such a height, that the Roman officer, fearing lest Paul might have been torn in pieces by the contending factions, ordered the guard immediately to carry him back
11. to the castle.—That night, the Lord favoured him with a heavenly vision, exhorting him not to sink under this persecution ; and informing him, that he was appointed to bear witness of the truth at Rome, as he had already done at Jerusalem.
12. 13. The Jews now found all their public measures against Paul ineffectual. Some of the most zealous of them, therefore, resolved on other means. About forty of these zealots binding themselves privately by an oath, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had destroyed him, went to the chief priests ;
14. 15. and informing them of their conspiracy, desired them to request the commanding officer to bring down Paul again the next day to be examined. In the mean time, they would seize the opportunity, as he came out of the castle, to fall upon him, and
16. put him to death.—This conspiracy was discovered by a young man, a kinsman of Paul ; who, procuring admittance into the castle, opened the whole
17. affair to the apostle. On this, Paul, calling a centurion, desired him to carry that young man to his

commanding officer; to whom he had a secret to impart.—Lyfias, taking the young man aside, 18.19.20. heard all the particulars of the affair; and dismissed^{21.} him with a charge of secrecy. He then ordered two 22. 23. centurions to have a body of horse and foot ready to march to Cæsarea at nine that evening; and to 24. provide beasts, to carry the prisoner Paul to Felix the proconsul; to whom he wrote the following 25. letter.

“ Claudius Lyfias to the most excellent governor 26. Felix, greeting.—The person presented to you 27. with this letter, is a Roman citizen; who, having been the occasion of a great tumult at Jerusalem, in which he was in danger of his life, was rescued by me, and conveyed to this castle. As I wished to 28. know what was objected to him, I brought him 29. before the high-priest and his council: but it appears to me, that the chief offence he has given is with regard to certain religious opinions which he holds; for nothing of a criminal nature has been laid to his charge. Finding, however, that the offence, of 30. whatever kind, was likely to occasion great disturbance here, I thought it right to remit the case to you, ordering the accusing party also to attend. Farewel.”

The centurions receiving the letter, carried Paul 31.32.33. that night to Antipatris; and the next day, the foot returning, the horsemen conducted him to Cæsarea; where they delivered the letter into the hands of Felix the proconsul; and at the same time presented

34. Paul.—Felix, having read the letter, asked to what province the prisoner belonged? And being informed that he was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia,
35. he ordered him into confinement, till his accusers

CHAP. should arrive.

XXIV.

1. 2. 3. 4. In less than a week, the high-priest Ananias, and many of the council, with an eloquent man, one Tertullus, whom they employed as an advocate, arrived at Cæsarea, as Paul's accusers; and the proconsul appointed a day of hearing.—Tertullus began his accusation of Paul, by paying the proconsul many compliments on the great happiness which the Jewish nation had long enjoyed under his government.—He then gave a brief account of the cause he had in hand; informing the proconsul, that the prisoner, who was a violent man, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, had been at the head of many seditions among the Jews, in different parts of the empire—and that, at Jerusalem, he had been guilty of an attempt to profane the temple—that they had had no intention of troubling the proconsul in this matter; but meant to have punished the prisoner agreeably to their own law; had not the tribune Lyfias taken him violently out of their hands,

3. These compliments were paid much at the expence of truth; for Josephus and Tacitus both inform us, how very corrupt a governor Felix was.

6. As the Jews could not put a criminal to death, though they were empowered to inflict slighter punishments, the real meaning of what Tertullus said, was, that they intended to have put him to death in a tumultuary manner, without any process of law at all.

and referred the matter to the proconsul's tribunal.

—This charge was supported by the high-priest and his council; who all bore witness to the truth of what had been alleged. 9.

The proconsul then giving Paul liberty to defend himself, he first expressed his satisfaction that he had a cause to defend before a judge, who had been, for many years, acquainted with the laws and customs of the Jews.—He then, in answer to the charge against him, gave a short account of his whole conduct. He said, that, about twelve days before, he had gone up to Jerusalem, to keep the feast of pentecost—but that he had neither disputed in the temple, nor in the synagogue, nor in the city—nor had taken any one step which had the least tendency to raise a sedition—that, in short, the whole charge against him was unsupported—and he might challenge them to *prove* any single particular of it.—With regard to his being a *ringleader* of the Nazarenes, he said, he owned himself a Christian; and though the Jews might call Christianity by 10.
11.
12.
13.
14.

14. Dr. Lardner lays great stress on the expression, *so worship I the God of my fathers*, as making the chief point of Paul's defence. I shall lay the substance of what he says before the reader. —“By the Roman laws, no man might introduce or worship foreign Gods, not allowed by public authority. Yet Christians were protected by law, because they worshipped the God of heaven and earth—the God whom the Jews worshipped; and whose worship was every where established. St. Paul's reasoning therefore was this. They call Christianity a new sect. Be it so: but in this way I worship the same God which they do; and therefore am entitled to protection equally with them.” Credib. p. i, b. i. ch. viii.

- the name of heresy, it was certainly the completion
 15. of their own law and prophets; and held out the
 great articles of a resurrection from the dead, and
 16. a state of rewards and punishments, which the ge-
 nerality of themselves allowed. In a word, he said,
 it was on the ground of this very persuasion, that
 he persevered, both in the performance of his duty
 to God, and in an inoffensive behaviour to man.
- 17, 18. —As to their last charge, of his *profaning the*
temple, he ran over the particulars of his coming to
 Jerusalem, to bring alms to the poor Christians
 there—of his purifying himself peaceably in the tem-
 ple—and of the violent attack that had been made
 19. upon him by the Asiatic Jews; whose not appear-
 ing against him, he thought, was ground sufficient
 20. to reject *this* part of the charge. Of these trans-
 actions, he said, the high-priest and council of the
 Jews, who were *not present*, could be *no witnesses*.
 They could be witnesses only of what had passed in
 21. their own assembly; where, he believed, nothing
 offensive could be produced against him, but his
 asserting the doctrine he had just mentioned, of the
 resurrection of the dead.
22. Felix, having thus heard the accusation and the
 defence, and knowing enough of the Christian re-

21. As Paul's asserting the resurrection of the dead had actually produced a tumult, (see chap. xxiii. 9, 10.) it is probable he might mention it now, in his defence, as the only circumstance which could give colour to his being a raiser of sedition; though it was clearly such a circumstance as no judge could turn into crime.

ligion, to be well assured there was nothing in its principles of seditious tendency, saw plainly how frivolous the accusation was, and did not choose to pass sentence against Paul. On the other hand, being unwilling to displease the Jewish council, he did not care to dismiss him. He, therefore, took a middle course; and told the Jews he should decide nothing in the affair, till the arrival of Lyfias the tribune; whom he would examine with regard to the several circumstances which had been alleged. —

In the mean time, he gave Paul into the custody of a centurion, with orders to let him have his full liberty of going any where, and of seeing whom he pleased. 23.

After this, Felix, for some time, left Cæsarea. 24.
On his return, he brought with him a Jewish lady, whose name was Drusilla: and whether through her curiosity, or his own, or some other motive, he sent for Paul, and desired to hear his account of the Christian faith. As Felix had been a great oppressor, and had now been guilty of a very flagrant action, in seducing Drusilla from her husband, Paul took this opportunity to awaken his conscience, by explaining the virtues of *justice* and *continence*, and enforcing what he said by the *terrors of a future judgment*. His discourse made such an impression on Felix, that he was thrown into great agitation 25.

25. The fact about Drusilla is mentioned by Josephus. Hist. lib. xx.

by it; and abruptly dismissing the apostle, told him he should hear him farther at a time of more leisure.—The impression, however, soon went off; and the mind of Felix (as is usual in such cases) returned to its former habits. He sent, however, frequently for Paul after this—not to hear him discourse any more on religious subjects; but with a view to extort money from him for his release; and in this suspense he held him two years.—About the end of that time, Portius Festus was appointed proconsul, in the room of Felix; and Felix, with a view to ingratiate himself with the Jews, left Paul

CHAP. still in custody.

XXV.

In a few days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went to Jerusalem; where, among the first articles of business, he was informed by the high-priest of the case of Paul; and was entreated to send for him to Jerusalem, and examine him there. But whether Festus had any intimation of the intention of the Jews to lay in wait for him, (which, in fact, they did intend,) or he had some other reason, he shewed, at first, no inclination to indulge them; but let them know he should examine him at

26. Felix knew the Christians to be a numerous and very charitable body; and that it was common with them to raise contributions for the assistance of their brethren.

27. How much reason he had to ingratiate himself with them is very evident: for he was accused with great vehemence of mal-administration, when he left his province; and had certainly been ruined, if great interest with Nero had not interposed. See this proved by quotations in Lardner's *Credib.* part i. book i. chap. i.

Cæsarea,

Cæsarea, where he himself was then going ; and that the accusers of Paul might follow him thither.—

5.

Accordingly, in about ten days, he went to Cæsarea, when Paul was brought before him—and the chief priests attended. The accusation contained little more, and, of course, the defence, than in the former trial.

6. 7. 8.

By this time, however, a better understanding had commenced between the chief priests and their new governor ; and Festus found it his interest to gratify the Jews with another trial in their own courts at Jerusalem. However, as Paul was a Roman citizen, this could not legally be done without his own consent.—Paul availed himself of his privilege ; and knowing the inveteracy of his enemies, he rejected the idea of a Jewish court, and refused to be tried by any laws but those of the empire. At the same time, considering the harsh treatment he had already met with at Cæsarea, where he had been in custody two years for no offence, he stood upon his innocence, and appealed from a provincial tribunal to that of Cæsar ; and Festus, having advised with his officers, allowed the appeal.

9.

10. 11.

12.

Soon after this, Herod Agrippa, tetrarch of Galilee, and his sister Bernice, came to Cæsarea, in compliment

13.

11. This appeal seems to have been made in consequence of the heavenly instruction he had received, chap. xxiii. 11.

13. This Agrippa, son of that Herod Agrippa who had put James to death, was king of Chalcis ; a small district lying, it is supposed, between Libanus and Antilibanus. The keeping of the

- compliment to Festus, on his arrival in the province;
 14. and Paul's cause becoming the subject of conversation
 15.16.17. between them, Festus mentioned what had been
 done in it—the circumstances of the trial—and the
 18. frivolous accusation brought against him. He had
 supposed, he said, the Jewish priests would have
 19. laid some civil crime to his charge: but instead of
 that, they accused the prisoner chiefly of holding a
 few superstitious opinions; particularly about one
 Jesus, who had been executed, and whom Paul
 20. affirmed to be still alive. As these were points,
 Festus said, about which he had no knowledge
 himself, and which, he thought, could only be de-
 cided properly in a Jewish court, he had wished to
 21. have the affair heard at Jerusalem. But as the pri-
 soner, who was a Roman citizen, had appealed to
 Cæsar, he had determined to send him to Rome.—
 22. On this, Agrippa expressed a desire to hear the ac-
 count which Paul had to give of himself; and Festus
 accordingly promised that he should hear him the

the temple of Jerusalem, with the holy garments, and the trea-
 sure, was committed to him by the emperor. In other respects
 he had little concern in Judea.—Bernice, his sister, is suspected
 to have lived criminally with him. Juvenal is supposed to allude
 to them in his sixth satire, where speaking of a rich diamond be-
 longing to Bernice, he says,

———hunc dedit olim

Barbarus incestæ, dedit hunc Agrippa forori.

This lady, who seems to have been the Cleopatra of those
 times, had once almost drawn aside the celebrated Titus; but
 that youthful conqueror at length subdued his passion. “Fuere
 qui accensum desiderio Berenices reginæ crederent. Sed gerendis
 rebus nullum ex eo impedimentum.” Tacit. Hist. l. ii. c. 3. See
 likewise Suetonius in Tit. c. 7.

next

next day.—The next day, therefore, Paul was 23.
 sent for to attend Festus, who was accompanied by
 Agrippa, Bernice, and their principal officers. The 24. 25.
 proconsul opened the business by saying, that as the
 prisoner, who had made himself so offensive to the
 Jews, had done nothing worthy of death, and had
 appealed to Cæsar, he had determined to send him
 to Rome; but as there appeared a very frivolous 26.
 charge against him, he was glad of the opportunity
 of this hearing before Agrippa, as it might furnish
 him with some better account of the affair than he
 had yet had: for there was something very improper, 27.
 he thought, in sending a prisoner, and not signifying,
 at the same time, the particulars of his crime.

CHAP.

XXVI.

1. 2.

Festus having thus opened the affair, Agrippa
 bad Paul make his defence: on which, raising his
 hand, he thus spoke.—I think it is a great hap-
 piness, king Agrippa, that I am allowed to answer 3.
 for myself this day before you; whom I well know
 to be informed in all the doctrines and customs of
 the Jews. I beseech you, therefore, to hear me pa-
 tiently.—My manner of life, from my earliest 4. 5.
 youth, is very well known to the Jews, if they
 would bear witness to it; and the principles, also,
 which I then professed. No man was a stricter
 Pharisee; nor more versed in the doctrines of that
 sect. No man trusted more in those gracious 6. 7.

4. St. Paul is supposed by Bp. Lowth, in his Commentary on
 Is. liii. 8. to allude to a Jewish custom, which had been denied him.
 See a note on John xviii. 21. where the same custom is supposed to
 be alluded to.

- promises made to our fathers, which are confessedly the great end of the Mosaic law, and the great foundation of the hope of every serious Jew. And yet I stand here accused, for believing that God hath fulfilled those promises and those hopes, by
8. raising Jesus Christ from the dead. Why should
9. 10. 11. it be thought incredible that God should raise the dead?—For myself, it cannot be imagined I embraced Christianity, on a slight evidence, after I had entered so deeply and so conscientiously into an opposition to it; having long been the instrument of severity in extirpating it, both in Judea, and
12. other places.—But my conversion had a still stronger ground-work than human evidence. It
13. 14. 15. was the immediate work of God.—Paul then gave
16. 17. 18. a summary account of his conversion; and particularly of the injunctions which the heavenly vision had laid upon him, to be a minister and an apostle of Christianity; to open the eyes of the blind; and to draw men to the acknowledgment of the truth—that, through faith and repentance, they
19. might inherit everlasting life.—This heavenly vision, king Agrippa, continued the apostle, I have
20. ever since obeyed; and have, every where, both

8. The apostle might allude either to the Jewish history, or the history of Christ, for instances of God's raising the dead: or, he might mean, that it was as easy for Almighty Power to raise a dead body, as to create a living one.

12. This account of St. Paul's conversion, given before so respectable an assembly, could not but be true, as it referred to recent facts, which might easily have been refuted if they had been false.

in

in Judea and among the Gentiles, preached merely the inoffensive doctrines of faith and repentance, which are the great tenets of the Christian religion: and this is the only ground of enmity which the Jews can allege against me:—Except that, through God's help, also, I have hitherto been enabled to testify, what is, at the same time, entirely agreeable to Moses and the prophets—that Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead; and be the great author of salvation to all mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews.

As Paul was thus speaking, Festus, who thought these doctrines strange and inconceivable, called out, with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself. Thy learning makes thee mad.—Paul denied the charge; and then turning to Agrippa, appealed to him for the facts which he had related. He could not, the apostle told him, be ignorant of these things; for they were all very public transactions; nor could he, as he was so nearly connected with the Jews, be ignorant of the tendency of the prophetic writings. And he boldly put the question to him, whether he did not believe the prophets? Agrippa freely confessed that his words had made some impression on him: to which Paul answered,

28. Some commentators suppose, that Agrippa's speech, *almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*, was spoken in derision. But it seems more probable, that it was a ray of conviction which just broke in upon him. Like Felix, however, he received no lasting impression; for we have no account that he ever became a Christian.

that he wished to God the truth might have its full effect, not only on him, but on all who had heard him that day; and that they might embrace it from conviction, as he had done; though without suffering, as he had, in its defence.

30. 31. Paul having ended his speech, Agrippa and Festus, conferring together, concluded that he had done nothing that deserved even imprisonment; and Agrippa said, he might certainly have been discharged, if he had not appealed to Cæsar.

CHAP.
XXVII.

1. 2.

As it was determined, therefore, that Paul should be sent to Italy, he was delivered, together with a Christian of Thessalonica, whose name was Aristarchus, and some other prisoners, into the hands of Julius, a centurion of Augustus's legion; and carried on board a Mysian vessel, which was engaged in a trading voyage along the coast of Asia.

3. The first port they entered was Sidon, where Julius, with great civility, gave Paul leave to go on shore and visit his friends.—From thence they stood to the north, intending to touch at some of the ports of Asia: but a contrary wind carried them along the coast of Cyprus; and they were not able

2. I have mentioned Aristarchus as a prisoner, which he seems to have been from Col. iv. 10. It does not, however, certainly appear; nor indeed for what purpose he is named. These little particularities, however, add some value to the truth of a relation, and are marks of its authenticity: for, *at the time*, we may suppose, they were well known; as they would not otherwise have been mentioned.

3. From the first person plural, used often in the description of this voyage, it appears that Luke still accompanied Paul.

to reach any Asiatic port, till they arrived at Myra in Lycia.—Here Julius found an Alexandrian vessel bound to Italy, and embarked on board it, together with the prisoners under his charge.—
 From this harbour their voyage was greatly interrupted by contrary winds; and it was several days before they were able to reach the eastern end of Crete, which they passed with difficulty, and took shelter in a bay, called the Fair-haven, not far from the town of Lacæa.—As it was now late, however, in the year, just after the fast of the atonement, when the stormy season generally sets in, Paul advised the centurion to winter where he was, as there would probably be great danger in putting to sea. But the centurion listened rather to the master of the ship, and others, who advised him to leave the haven, as incommodious to winter in, and to endeavour to reach Phenice. This was a Cretan harbour likewise, and a much safer road, being totally landlocked by a small island, except in the two different directions through which it is entered between the two points of the island and the Cretan coast.—
 Taking the advantage, therefore, of a gentle breeze

6.

7.

8.

9. 10.

11. 12.

13.

6. Mr. Bryant, in his dissertation on the wind Euroclydon, has given us a very satisfactory account of the Alexandrine trade to Italy, which consisted chiefly in corn. See p. 17.

9. This fast is kept at the end of September, about the time of the equinoctial winds. See Levit. xxiii. 27, and xvi. 29. Num. xxix. 7. Jos. Antiq. iii. 10. 3.

10. Paul no doubt often spoke as a mere man. Here perhaps, from some signs in the heavens, he foresaw a storm. Many interpreters, however, suppose him under the influence of inspiration. Either sense may be admitted.

- from the south, they set sail, coasting along the shores of Crete, in hopes of reaching Phenice without difficulty. But a violent storm arising soon after from the north-east, the ship became unmanageable, and the seamen were obliged to let her drive.
14. —At the south-west end of Crete lies a small island, named Clauda. Under the shelter of this land, they got up the boat with some difficulty; and passing a cable round the ship, they drew in all the sails, and resigned themselves to the mercy of the winds. They were chiefly afraid of the quick-sands, towards which the tempest drove them.—
18. The next day, the storm increasing, they threw out a quantity of the lading; and the day after, they were obliged to cut away a part of the masts and rigging. In this condition, being tossed about many days in a raging sea, and seeing neither sun nor stars to direct their course, either by day or night,

14. Much has been said about the wind called Euroclydon. It is probable it was what is now called a *Levanter*, a storm blowing from all quarters, by turns.

15. The expression in the original is very animated: *πλοῖον μὴ δύναμεν ἀντιφάσκειν τῷ ἀνέμῳ*: *the ship could no longer look the storm in the face.*

17. This practice, which is here called *undergirding the ship*, is in use at this day. In Lord Anson's voyage the captain of a Spanish ship, we are told, was obliged, in a storm, *to take six turns of the cable round the ship, to prevent her opening.*

17. These are generally supposed to have been the African quick-sands, where, Virgil tells us, Æneas suffered the loss of three of his ships.

—————Tres Euris ab alto
In brevia, et fyrtes urget———

19. What is particularly meant by throwing out *the tackling of the ship*, is not easy to say. It is plain from ver. 40, that *all* their masts were not cut away.

they

they gave up all hopes of being saved.—Paul, 21. 22.
 however, after they had undergone much fatigue,
 reminding the seamen of the loss they had already
 suffered, through the neglect of his advice at Crete,
 bad them still be of comfort; for he was assured
 they should all yet be saved. This night, said he, 23.
 the angel of that God whom I serve, appeared unto
 me; and informed me, I must be carried to Rome. 24. 25. 26.
 From this vision, I know we shall be cast on an
 island; but no lives will be lost. Trust, therefore,
 in this assurance from God.—The ship having 27. 28.
 now been driven about during fourteen days, and
 the storm still continuing, at midnight, the seamen
 conjectured they drew near land, as they found only
 twenty fathom of water, and soon after, only fifteen.
 They threw out four anchors, therefore, from the 29.
 stern, and wished for the morning. Some of them, 30.
 however, not liking their situation in the ship, and
 choosing rather to trust themselves to the boat, began
 to let her down, under a pretence of fixing other
 anchors at the prow. But Paul observing them, 31.
 told the centurion, that he must not suffer them to
 leave the ship. It was not God's intention, he

27. This sea is called *Adria*; but it is generally supposed that the Mediterranean, and not the Adriatic, is meant. See Wells's Geog. of the New Testament. See also Bochart. Strabo and other ancient geographers certainly give great latitude to the Mediterranean: and an old scholiast upon Dionysius's *Periegesis*, says Το Σικελικόν τε το πηλάγιος Ἀδριαν καλεῖται. They call the Sicilian-sea, *Adria*. What is now called the *Adriatic*, was formerly the *Sinus Adriaticus*, a bay of the Adriatic, not the Adriatic itself.

said, to save them by a miracle; but through the
 32. means of their own strenuous endeavours. The sol-
 diers, on this, cut the ropes; and let the boat drop
 33. into the sea. As day came on, Paul, having now
 gained a great ascendancy in the ship, called the
 crew together, who had eaten little or nothing the
 34. day before, and advised them to take some refresh-
 ment, assuring them again, that not one of them
 35. should perish.—He then took food, and giving
 36. thanks, he distributed it among them. The apos-
 tle's behaviour occasioned a general cheerfulness and
 37:38.39. alacrity among all that were on board. Their first
 40.41.42. business was to lighten the ship, by throwing out
 43. 44. the remaining part of the wheat, with which she
 was laden.—It was now day-light, and the land
 appeared; but what land they knew not. Ob-
 serving, however, a creek, they determined, if
 possible, to run the ship into it. Taking up the
 anchors, therefore, and hoisting a sail, they loosed
 the helm, and ran directly for the shore.—Between
 them and the coast lay a bank of sand, formed by
 two opposite currents. On this shelf the ship ran
 aground; and the fore-part being immoveably fixed,
 the stern was beaten in pieces by the violence of the
 waves. In this exigence, the soldiers advised to

33. This passage is very ill translated in our Testament. The words in the original, *τεσσαρεκαδικατες σιμρον κρησαν προσδεκοντες, ασιτοι διατιδιστε ιανδη προσλαβουμενοι*, may be thus literally rendered; *All this fourteenth day have you awaited, and continued fasting, having taken nothing.* The day before is meant; as the day and night made the Jewish day.

put the prisoners to death, lest any of them should escape. But the centurion, through his particular regard for Paul, prevented them; and all had liberty to endeavour to save themselves. They who could swim, leaped first into the sea; and the rest got on rafts, or broken pieces of the ship: so that, in the end, every person on board, though the company consisted of two hundred and seventy-six people, got safe to shore.

As soon as they landed, they found the island was called Malta; the inhabitants of which, though a barbarous

CHAP.
XXVIII.

1. 2.

1. Mr. Bryant has endeavoured to shew, that Paul was not shipwrecked on the island of Malta, but on another island of the same name in the Adriatic. I admire his learning; but cannot easily accede to his conclusion. — In the first place, there are very good authorities, particularly that of the Alexandrine MS. for reading *Ευρακιδων*, for *Ευροκιδων*. If so, the ship was driven by a north-east wind; in which situation she could scarce possibly enter the gulf of the Adriatic, but would be very naturally driven towards Malta. — Secondly, another ship is mentioned, (xxviii. 11.) as driven out of its course in the same direction, and to the same place, as that in which St. Paul was driven. To suppose two ships driven so exceedingly out of their course, and, as it appears, at different times, is perhaps supposing too much. — Thirdly, the manners of the people, as described by St. Luke, agree much better with the inhabitants of Malta, than with those of the Adriatic isle. The inhabitants of the latter, according to Mr. Bryant's own account, were the most lawless people upon earth. They lived by piracy; and for their crimes had been almost extirpated by the Romans. It is true, St. Paul calls the inhabitants of the island where he landed, a barbarous people: but it may easily be supposed he called them so merely in conformity to the Greeks and Romans, who styled all people barbarians who spoke a language different from their own. Thus Paul himself in another place says, (1 Cor. xiv. 11.) *If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian; and he that speaketh, shall be a barbarian unto me.* Certain it is, that by whatever name he called them, he meant to express no barbarity in their manners, as one should naturally

3. barbarous people, administered to their wants, and shewed them every kindness in their power.——Soon after their landing, it happened, that as Paul was taking up a bundle of wood for the fire, a viper, which was concealed in it, fastened upon his hand.
4. The people who stood around him observing it, concluded immediately that he was some very
5. wicked person, whom the vengeance of heaven still pursued, though he was suffered to escape the storm.
6. But when they saw him shake the viper into the fire, and instead of swelling, and falling down dead, as they expected, appear not to be in the least
7. injured, they changed their minds, and thought him a God.

expect in a nest of proscribed pirates. They shewed the apostle and his company great kindness from the very moment of their landing. The place where they landed was civilised enough to afford lodgings for two hundred and seventy-six people; and when all this company departed, they were not only *loaded with such things as were necessary*, but presented with many gifts. There seems also to have been a Roman governor in the island, as one should judge from his name, and the manner in which he is introduced.——Fourthly, after the winter was over, we are told, that when Paul and his company embarked again, they touched first at Syracuse in Sicily, from whence they went to Rhegium. This was exactly their right course from Malta; but somewhat out of it, if they came from the Adriatic isle. In that case, they must have touched first at Rhegium, and then at Syracuse; if they had any business at Syracuse at all.——Lastly, a tradition yet exists at Malta of St. Paul's landing there. On the north-east coast a place is shewn, bearing the name of *La cala di S. Paolo*: and here (as a captain of an English ship who had been there assured me) a place may be seen *where two seas meet*.——The island of Malta takes its name from the quantity of honey it produces.

6. Some late travellers have asserted, that in the island of Malta there are no venomous creatures. It is rather, I think, asserting too boldly a point so difficult to be ascertained. Such negative evidence deserves but little credit.

Near

Near the place where the ship went on shore, the principal person of the island, whose name was Publius, resided; who, sending for Paul and his company, kindly entertained them at his house, till they could get lodgings provided.—Soon after, Paul, hearing that Publius's father was seized with a fever and dysentery, went to him, and by his prayers restored him to health.—This brought many of the island who had diseases to the apostle; all of whom he healed,

They had now been three months in Malta; during which time they had received many tokens of kindness from the friendly islanders: but the winter being past, Julius began to think of continuing his voyage to Rome. He hired an Alexandrian vessel, therefore, which had wintered in the isle, whose name was Castor and Pollux, in which he set sail; and landed first at Syracuse, where the ship continued three days.—From thence coasting the eastern side of Sicily, the vessel anchored in the bay of Rhegium; and the next day obtaining

11. Called so probably from the images of Castor and Pollux on her prow, as was usual among the ancients:

——aurato fulgebat Apolline puppis.

ÆN. x.

13. The Greek word is *περιηδοντες*; which is translated, *fetched a compass*: but it is fetching no compass to sail along the coast of Sicily from Syracuse to Rhegium. The meaning therefore must either be, that they *sailed along the coast*, which the word may express: or, if it be translated, *fetched a compass*, it must mean, that they were obliged to make several *tacks*, as the seamen call them, before they could reach Rhegium.

- a favourable breeze from the south, passed the straits, and soon arrived at Puteoli. Here Paul found several Christians; and at their earnest desire, staid a week with them, and then set out for Rome.—
14. His approach being known, several Christians came out of the city to meet him; some as far as the three Taverns, and others as far as the Appii forum. Paul thanked God for his goodness; and took new courage, on finding that the Christian religion was so openly professed at Rome, that its converts durst shew their regard to a persecuted apostle.—On their arrival at Rome, Julius delivered the prisoners to the præfect of the prætorian cohorts: but representing Paul's case favourably, the apostle was permitted to dwell by himself, with a single soldier to guard him.
15. There were, at this time, among the regular inhabitants of Rome, many Jews, who had settled
- 17.18.19.
20.

14. This shews how much the apostle was favoured by the centurion.

15. It is remarkable, that Tully also mentions *these two places together*, in one of his letters to Atticus (ii. 10). He is speaking of two notes which he had written to him, as he left Rome. He wrote one, he says, ab Appii foro horâ quartâ: dederam aliam, paulo ante, in tribus Tabernis. The former of these places was about fifty miles from Rome, the latter about thirty.

16. The præfect of the prætorian cohorts, at this time, was Burrhus, an officer of great worth; who, with Seneca, endeavoured to check the early improprieties and absurdities of Nero. — Paul's confinement was the most easy the Roman law allowed. According to the Roman custom, a chain of a convenient length was fastened round the right arm of the prisoner, and round the left of the soldier. We need not however suppose, that this chain was always fastened, but only when he went abroad.

there

there on various occasions. Paul, therefore, within a day or two after his arrival, sent a message to the principal of them, entreating them to come to him at his lodging. When they were assembled, he told them, that as his case was a peculiar one, he had sent for them to give them the particulars of it.—He then informed them of the circumstances of his trial, and the reasons which had induced him to make that appeal, which had brought him to Rome.—He did not mean, he said, to accuse his countrymen, but to defend himself—assuring them, at the same time, that nothing had been laid to his charge at Jerusalem, but the propagation of that gospel, to which all the prophets pointed.—

When he had done speaking, the Jews assured him, 21.
they had heard nothing to his disadvantage from any of their brethren in Judea: only this they knew, 22.
that the Christian religion was every where opposed; and therefore they desired to know from him what could be said for it.—Accordingly, a day was ap- 23.
pointed, and a numerous assembly of Jews coming to his lodgings, he expounded the gospel to them, and shewed them how exactly it had fulfilled the predictions of Moses and the prophets.—What 24.25.26.
he said had its effect on many. But others paid 27.
no attention to his discourse. These he reminded of the prophet Isaiah's severe description of persons in their situation, who purposely excluded themselves from the truth.—He then opened to them the 28.

26. See Isa. vi. 9.

intention of God, in offering to the Gentiles the blessings of the gospel, which they would accept, though the Jews had rejected them.—It appeared, however, that the Jews had violent disputes among themselves about these things.

29. After this, Paul continued two years at Rome, in his own house; which he turned into a kind of school of religion, and preached the gospel without the least molestation from any one.

30. The case of Paul, as a minister of the gospel, was now much improved by his appeal. While he was prisoner in Judea, it does not appear that he exercised any apostolical functions. Now, he received all who came to him—made converts—wrote epistles to distant churches—sent out fellow-labourers; and, in short, exercised all the apostolic duties, except that of visiting in person. We have no reason, therefore, to regret the apostle's appeal to Cæsar. It was a prudent measure on his part, as he could not otherwise have avoided the malicious persecution of the Jews: and it discovers the over-ruling providence of God in the various happy events which were occasioned by it.

END OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,

GENERAL PREFACE

TO

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES.

WE have seen the particulars of the life of our blessed Saviour recorded in the writings of the four evangelists; and have seen also, in the Acts of the Apostles, the manner in which the Christian religion was first propagated among heathen nations. We come now to the Epistles, or those letters which the apostles wrote to the several churches they had established, either to confirm their faith, or to remove the errors which had been introduced among them.

Most of these epistles were written by St. Paul; whose writings are commonly esteemed among the most difficult parts of scripture. Though he is considered as a close reasoner, by those* who are themselves the greatest masters of reasoning; yet it often requires more than ordinary attention to follow his argument.

One source of obscurity is the quickness of his ideas. They crowd upon him. One thought often starts another,

* See Mr. Locke on St. Paul's epistles.

which

which does not directly follow it in place ; but being necessary for the support of some point arising from the subject, though not leading immediately to it, requires that we should watch the writer's return to his principal point, with some attention.

The undetermined use of the pronouns *I* and *we* is thought also by learned men to occasion obscurity in St. Paul's writings. Sometimes the apostle speaks in his own person ; sometimes as a Jew ; sometimes as a Gentile ; sometimes as an infidel ; and sometimes as a believer.

But the chief obscurity in St. Paul's writings arises from the subject. The other epistles, which are called *catholic*, are commonly written on *general* topics of religion. The epistles of St. Paul are of a different construction. They are principally intended to oppose such antichristian tenets as were getting ground in the apostle's time. Many parts, indeed, of these epistles are direct answers to questions, or to the particular statement of cases which had been put to the apostle : and the obscurity arises from our having the answer only before us, but not the question.—St. Paul's epistles have lately received much elucidation from a very ingenious and acute work by Mr. Paley, intitled *Hora Paulina*, in which their authenticity has been greatly strengthened, by producing a variety of incidents from them, corresponding with other incidents in the history of St. Paul. It is an admirable proof, so far as it goes, that every part of scripture hangs together.

P R E F A C E

TO

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE to the ROMANS.

THE most obstinate controversy, in the early age of the Christian church, was that which was raised by the Jewish Christians in behalf of the law of Moses, which the more zealous among them contended was necessary to justification. This controversy was carried on with great acrimony, both at Rome and in other places, where Christian converts consisted of Jews and Gentiles. Nor need we wonder at the great ascendancy of the Jewish over the Gentile Christians, when we consider that Jesus was himself a Jew—that his life had been spent in Judea—that his personal application had been made solely to the Jews—and that the Jewish Scriptures afforded one of the strongest proofs of Christianity. When, therefore, after our Saviour's death, the completion of those grand prophecies, with regard to the *rejection of the Jews*, the *call of the Gentiles*, and the *total abrogation of the Mosaic economy*, was taking place, the bulk of the Jewish nation was highly offended. This revolution, indeed, was so mortifying to them, that even many who had seriously embraced the Christian

Christian religion, could not easily lay aside their prejudices on this head. Their pride, in being God's favourite people—their contempt of the Gentiles—their belief of inheriting the promises of God, as Abraham's children—their attachment to the temple-worship—to circumcision, and the other ceremonies of the Mosaic law, as necessary to justification—and their throwing scruples and difficulties in the way of the Gentile converts—were opinions and practices, which the apostles thought it highly necessary at all times to oppose.

These are the chief subjects of the following epistle to the Romans; in which St. Paul gives the Christian converts at Rome, both Jews and Gentiles, just notions of the religion they had received. He tells them, that the ceremonies of the Jewish law were now fulfilled and abolished—that although many *individuals* among the Jews might embrace the gospel—yet, as a *people*, they were rejected—that, with regard to religious privileges, no *one* nation was now more favoured by God than *another*—and that the Gentiles, according to the predictions of the prophets, were called, together with the Jews, to partake equally of the benefits of the gospel; and on faith and repentance, to be equal inheritors with them of everlasting life.

But though *this controversy* with the Jews concerns the Christians of *these times* very little, who, from their earliest youth, have been instructed in those truths, to which the apostle led the Jews by long reasoning; yet *other controversies*, for want of attending to the scope of the apostle's argument, have been ingrafted upon it, which import them much—controversies particularly about *predestination* and *faith*.

The controversy about *predestination* probably did not arise in the church, till that early one with regard to
Jews

Jews and Gentiles, on which it is founded, had been forgotten. The scope and connection of St. Paul's warm and figurative expressions, when he speaks of *vessels of mercy*, and *vessels of wrath fitted for destruction*, not being sufficiently attended to, the *primary* meaning of them was lost with a large party of Christians; and instead of being explained as *terms* expressing the general *faith and penitence* of one nation, and the general *hardened infidelity* of another, they were made to express the *salvation of one man* and the *damnation of another*—not according to the gospel-terms of faith and repentance; but by the absolute decrees of God. Whereas, in fact, the apostle seems not to have the least allusion to *particular persons*. The words *elect*, *chosen*, and *justified*, were terms familiar among the Jews for persons conditionally called into a state of grace; and as such St. Paul adopts them.

From the same discourses, mistakes again have arisen with regard to *faith and works*. St. Paul chiefly addresses his argument to the Jews, who conceived the Mosaic ceremonies, or the works of the law, to be necessary to salvation. It is most probable, therefore, when he speaks of *justification by faith*, he means, in general, *justification by the gospel*, which we accept through *faith*: and when he speaks of *works*, his argument most frequently requires him to mean the *ceremonies and observances of the Mosaic law**.—I speak in general; for he sometimes, no doubt, treats of that great gospel-doctrine, *the insufficiency of all moral works to procure God's favour, without the merits of Christ*.

In this epistle, the apostle, after his introduction, expresses his joy at the steadiness of his new converts; and intimates his intention of going to Rome, 115—shews the

* See a note on Acts xxi. 21.

necessity of the gospel dispensation; first, to the heathen world; and secondly, to the Jews, 116—answers an objection, with regard to the utility of the Jewish law, 118—resumes his argument, 119—General idea of Christianity, 120—The case of Abraham considered, 120—applied to the Jewish law, 121—nature of Abraham's faith: applied to Christians, 122—Love of God shewn in the Christian dispensation, 123—universality of Christ's atonement, 124—holiness of life the great end of Christianity, 124—salvation through Christ as necessary to the Jew as to the Gentile, 126—blessedness of the gospel, 127—particularly in our afflictions, 129—The apostle bemoans the state of the Jewish nation, 131—vindicates the judgments of God, 131—shews that his treatment both of Jews and Gentiles is agreeable to the predictions of the prophets, 134—and that Moses himself pointed out God's intention of superseding the law by the gospel, 135—the gospel ought of course, therefore, to be preached to the Gentiles, 136—The rejection of the Jews only partial and temporary, 137—the conversion of the Gentiles will, in part, contribute to convert the Jews, 137—but a time will certainly come, when their *national* conversion shall be effected, 139—The Jew and Gentile converts exhorted to live together in purity and peace, 139—Instructions with regard to civil government, 141—Difference in opinion should create no animosity amongst Christians, 142—The apostle intimates a design of visiting the Roman Christians, 145—and concludes with particular commendations; and cautions against ill-designing persons, 147.

EPISTLE

OF

ST. PAUL TO THE ROMANS.

PAUL, appointed by the immediate revelation CHAP.
of God, to be an apostle of the Gentiles; I.
and to teach the religion of that Saviour, who, 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
being foretold by the prophets, and descending in 6. 7.
a natural course from David, was declared by mira-
cles, and his resurrection from the dead, to be Son
of God—grace and peace to all the Christian con-
verts at Rome,

It is with great thankfulness to God that I hear 8.
of your steadfastness in the Christian faith. My 9.
prayers, be assured, you always have; and among 10.
my other requests to God, it is one, that I may see
you soon; and that we may comfort each other by
our spiritual intercourse. Often have I intended 11. 12.
to visit you; but have been hitherto prevented. 13.

I 2

My

- 14.15.16. My apostleship extends both to the civilized and barbarous parts of the Gentile world: and I am not ashamed to preach the gospel of Christ, even at Rome—that gospel, which holds out, through faith, the only means of salvation vouchsafed to fallen man.
- 17.
18. 19. The guilt of sin is pointed out by nature. God hath strongly impressed a sense of religion and duty on the minds of men. From the visible creation they might have inferred an invisible Creator. But instead of pursuing such inferences of reason, and shewing that gratitude which they ought to the divine goodness; they gave themselves up to their corrupt imaginations; setting up the resemblances of men, and even of beasts, as the objects of worship.—Abominable lives, of course, followed an abominable religion; and there is not a single instance
- 20.
21. 22.
- 23.
24. 25.
- 26.27.28.
- 29.30.31.
- 32.

17. *As it is written, the just shall live by faith.* This is a very apposite application of a passage in Habbakuk. That prophet had been representing to the Jews (chap. ii. 4.) the approach of captivity; and takes occasion to shew them, that the proud and obstinate should suffer; and that they who had faith in the prophecy should escape.—*The righteousness of God* signifies, in this passage, as in other parts of scripture, rather the *manner of being justified*, than the *righteousness of God's nature*.—*From faith to faith*—from faith in God to faith in Christ.

18. *Who held the truth in unrighteousness*—who imprison it, as it were, by their wicked lusts and passions.

21. It is remarkable, that *gratitude* is here put for the whole of religion. Similar expressions are frequent in scripture; in which a *considerable part* is put for the *whole*.

24, &c. We have the same process of wickedness from idolatry, given us in the Wisdom of Solomon; in which (cap. xiv.) we find the following passages.—“Therefore upon the idols of the Gentiles

stance of wickedness, which has not been commonly practised, and even encouraged; in the heathen world.

In the mean time, is the self-approving Jew less guilty? In condemning his Gentile neighbours, he condemns himself. No doubt, he is right, in denouncing the judgments of God against sinners: but does he not involve himself in the same sentence? Nay, has he not more to answer for, from his scorning the goodness of God, which would lead him, as it were, by the hand, to repentance—from his rejecting the means of grace—and from his defying that righteous tribunal, which, in exact proportion, will distribute reward and punishment both to Jew and Gentile? There the Jewish prejudice shall have no place. Every sinner, in that right-

CHAP.

II.

1. 2.

3.

4.

5. 6. 7. 8.
9. 10.

11.

12. 16.

Gentiles shall be a visitation. They are become a stumbling block to the souls of men. The devising of idols was the beginning of spiritual fornication; and the invention of them, the corruption of life. They ascribe unto stones and stocks the *incommunicable name*. Moreover, it was not enough for them that they erred in the knowledge of God; they slew their children in sacrifices—they used strange rites—they kept neither lives nor marriages any longer undefiled—there reigned in all men slaughter, theft, dissimulation, perjury, changing of kind, disorder in marriages, adultery, and shameless uncleanness.—The worshipping of idols is the beginning, the cause, and the end of all evil.”

4. *Or despisest thou the RICHES.* From the redundant use of the words *riches* and *rich* in St. Paul’s Epistles, (which are words seldom used in the same figurative sense in other parts of scripture,) Mr. Paley, with his usual acuteness, draws an argument in favour of their authenticity. See Hor. Paul. p. 236.

12. *As many as have sinned without law*—that is, without the Mosaic law, or under the law of nature.

16. I have here transposed the 16th verse, and added it to the 12th, to avoid the difficulty of a long parenthesis.

eous day, shall be judged impartially, according to
 13.14.15. the light he has received. The upright Gentile
 and the nominal Jew shall find very different treat-
 17.18.19. ment. Externals will be of no avail. — You call
 20. yourself a Jew; you boast of your exact knowledge
 in the law; and of your being a guide of the ig-
 norant. But your precepts are confined to others.
 21.22.23. They direct not your own practice. Your actions
 24. contradict your preaching; and you continue to
 fulfil that ancient complaint of the prophet, that the
 Jew even increases the irreligion of the Gentile.
 25. What! is circumcision, do you suppose, an excuse
 for sin? Shall that which profits you only, if you
 keep the law, be a cover to you for *transgressing the*
 26. *law*? Shall a mere ceremony, unconnected with
 27. morals, give you any advantage over the Gentile?
 Or rather, shall not his natural probity discounte-
 nance you, if you have nothing to boast but mere
 28. externals? It is not outward circumcision that con-
 29. stitutes the Jew: it is the circumcision of the heart
 only, which meets the approbation of God.

CHAP.

III.

1.

2.

Since, then, both Jews and Gentiles are thus
 equally involved in guilt, it may be asked, What
 advantage ariseth from the Jewish dispensation. —
 I answer, chiefly in its being the vehicle of convey-
 ing, through different ages, God's promises of sal-

21. See Matt. xxiii. 3.

22. *Idolatry* is spiritual *sacrilege*. In Justinian's code, under the title of *Sacrilege*, we find, *Imperatoris eripere, quod ejus est*.

24. This alludes probably to Ezek. xxxvi. 23.: or Isa. lii. 5.

vation, which are and will be completed, notwithstanding the infidelity of the Jews themselves. The infidelity of man only the more recommends the truth of God.

If then, replies the Jew, the truth of God be recommended by my infidelity, does it not seem hard that I, who am the author of so happy an effect, should be the object of God's displeasure? — What! shall we impute injustice, in any instance, to the great judge of heaven and earth? Extend the doctrine farther: let every other sinner conceive himself the favourite of heaven; and let the slander pass universally, that the apostles of Christ preach the necessity of evil, that good may arise from it.—I hope so mischievous an error will never get ground among you.

On the whole, then, we conclude, that both Jew and Gentile are in a sinful, unjustified state—a state described by David in the fourteenth psalm, and in other parts of scripture, where we have catalogues given of various kinds of wickedness. The Jew may apply such passages, perhaps, only to the Gentile: but let him be assured, that an application was intended also to him. The prophet undoubtedly means to describe the *universal guilt of mankind*.—From hence, therefore, we conclude that the law

10. The word faith (*πίστις*) being here applied to God, can mean only his *truth*, or the *fidelity of his promises*.

20. By the *law* here the apostle seems to mean (in order to give his argument its full force) *law of every kind, moral and ceremonial*.

could not justify. It gave man, indeed, a more
 21. accurate knowledge of sin; but could not save him
 from its effects.

22.23.24. But now another mode of salvation, and yet testified by the law and the prophets, is offered to mankind, though the law itself could not offer one—salvation through faith in Christ; which, as *all bad*
 25. *sinned*, is freely *offered to all*. This great mode of salvation, God hath now held forth for the remission
 26. of sins; and hath, in one act, declared both his truth in the completion of his promises, and his goodness
 27. in shewing mercy to sinful man. All pre-eminence
 28. then and boasting are excluded. The privileges of the law are of no avail. God is not now styled the
 29. God of Israel, but the God of all mankind. The
 30. circumcised and uncircumcised are all justified alike
 31. by faith; which is so far from being contradictory to the law, that, in fact, it is a confirmation of it,
 CHAP. by establishing its promises.

IV.
 1. 2. Indeed you will find this mode of justification by faith even prior to the law. Consider the case of Abraham. On what, I ask, was his justification grounded? You find nothing said of his glorying in any works or observances; or of his being justified by any thing of that kind. But you read,
 3. that *he believed in God*; and that his *belief was*

28. The word *law* in this passage seems to be confined to the Mosaic law.

30. *By faith* and *through faith* seem to convey the same meaning.

3. Gen. xv. 6.

counted to him for righteousness. Now if Abraham 4.
 had depended on his own righteousness for his justifi-
 cation, he would have claimed it *as his due*. But, 5.
 you see, he makes no such claim; receiving it as 6. 7. 8.
 the free grace of God, who accepted his faith for
 righteousness; just as David also speaks of God's
 justifying his faithful people, by mercifully blotting
 out their sins.

The present question, then, how far the Jewish 9. 10.
 law avails in justifying its professors, admits an easy
 answer from the case of Abraham. We have seen
 that Abraham *was justified by faith*. We find also
 that he was justified *before he was circumcised*. Cir- 11. 12. 13.
 cumcision, therefore, so far from being the *cause of*
his acceptance with God, was only the *seal of that ac-*
ceptance, which had been vouchsafed to him *through*
faith. Thus he became properly the father of all
 true believers, without any distinction of Jew or
 Gentile. So that if the Jew claim the inheritance 14.
 of the promise from Abraham, merely as a Jew, he

3. As a comment on St. Paul in this place, we must read the following passage from St. James ii. 21. *Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, when he had offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar? Seest thou, how faith wrought with his works; and by works was faith made perfect?* From the comparison of these two passages we conclude, that it was the holy life which Abraham led, through his faith in the promises of God, that was his recommendation to mercy.

8. See Pf. xxxii. 1.

13. *Heir of the world*; that is, of all the faithful that should be collected from every part of the world, who should be given him, as it were, for a posterity. The Hebrews use the word *heir* in that sense.

plainly

plainly sets aside the only title by which that patriarch himself inherited, and leaves himself still under the penalties of the law. God hath promised acceptance only on the condition of *faith*; which is both an easier condition, and the only way he hath appointed to fulfil the promise made to Abraham, of making him *the father of many nations*.—Consider, then, the nature of Abraham's faith. God had promised him a numerous posterity in his old age; which to him appeared like raising the dead. He had such faith, however, in God, that, without hesitation, he firmly believed and trusted in him who had promised, not doubting but he was able to perform: and this faith was imputed to him for righteousness.—Nor can we suppose that Abraham's faith was casually mentioned. It was recorded certainly for our instruction. The same righteousness will be imputed to us, if we follow the example of Abraham. He firmly believed in that God who raised up Isaac, as it were, by a miracle. Let us as firmly believe in the resurrection of Christ, who died for our offences, and rose again to establish and confirm his promises.

17. *Who calleth those things, &c.* that is, who speaketh of things which do not yet exist, as if they really did exist; because he foresees their existence in due time.

24. The nature of Abraham's faith is here again plain from this passage. He believed in the promises of God; and through that faith he performed the will of God.

On this true faith, then, let us rest; and having obtained peace with God through Christ, let us evermore rejoice in this blessed hope, and be ready to suffer any affliction for the sake of our profession. Affliction is the exercise of Christian virtue; and tends, in proportion as the love of the world fails, to dilate our hearts with the love of God—of that God, who gave his Son to die for us, even when we were the greatest sinners. However upright a man's general character may be, he will not easily find a friend ready to suffer death for his sake. Where benefits, indeed, have been conferred, the effects of gratitude may be great. In what light, then, should we consider the love of God, who gave his Son to die for us, even when we were engaged in the most hardened opposition to him? From such an instance of kindness in the death of Christ, we cannot but have the most assured hope from his resurrection; and evermore rejoice in that great

3. *We glory in tribulation.* The apostle very often advances this doctrine, to shew the Jews the nature of Christ's kingdom, as our Saviour before had often shewn his disciples. The Jews, from the beginning, were unwilling to acknowledge that the Messiah's kingdom was to have any thing to do with tribulation.

6. Ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀνέθαν properly signifies *he died in the room or stead of sinners.*

7. Goodwin in his *Jewish Antiquities* (l. i. c. ix.) has a very ingenious explication of this celebrated passage. He supposes it to allude to the rabbinical distinction of mankind, into *good, righteous, and sinful.* The good man is he who acts in a sphere superior to all human laws; while the *righteous* man is satisfied with the boundaries which law allows him. Some instead of ἀνέθαν read ἀδίκη. — It is thus in the Syriac version. See a note on Matt. i. 19.

atonement, which has opened to us everlasting happiness.

12. Thus was redemption, through Christ, as general
 13. 14. as death through Adam. For though Adam's *mode of transgression* could not be general; yet every man followed his example, and sinned against some law: for where there is no law, there can be no sin. And thus, from Adam's time, the reign of death has
 15. been universal.—But now observe the difference between the fall and the redemption of mankind. Observe how much the benefit of the latter out-
 16. weighs the mischief of the former. By the one,
 17. Adam's *particular trespass* was punished: through the other, *all our sins in general* are forgiven. By the former, *death* was incurred: by the latter, *eternal happiness*
 18. 19. is obtained. And observe farther, that as all the nations of the earth were rendered guilty by the offence of Adam; it follows, that all the nations of the earth shall be restored by Christ.
 20. The law, no doubt, gave new powers to sin, by
 21. opening its guilt and its effects; and the more sin triumphs, so much greater appears the efficacy of grace, which counteracts its ruinous effects.

CHAP.

VI.

1. 2. Shall we, then, make the grace of the gospel an apology for sin? God forbid! The Christian, by his profession, is dead to sin. The very act of his
 3. 4. initiation implies it. What does baptism represent, but our dying to sin, and rising to righteousness?

4. This idea alludes to the ancient mode of immersion.

How again are we to imitate the death of Christ, 5. 6.
 but by crucifying our sins; that being renewed in
 righteousness by his death, we may partake of his
 resurrection? He that is *dead* is free from sin.
 The *life* of a Christian should be such a *death*. 7. 8.
 Unless, in this moral sense, we die with Christ,
 we cannot hope to live with him. After his
 crucifixion, Christ died no more. Having died
 once for sin, an eternity of life was before him.
 You, too, have died once to sin: be now, therefore, 11.
 for ever alive to God, through Christ.—Let the 12. 13.
 Christian, then, as far as he can, make this mortal
 life a life of purity; and dedicate all his passions
 and affections to that holiness, which his profession
 demands. Being delivered from the terror of the 14.
 law, he is now received into mercy through grace.
 —Only still let me caution you not to presume on 15.
 God's grace, Your service must not be divided 16.
 between sin and the gospel. You must renounce
 the one, before you can attach yourselves to the
 other. But I trust in God, your choice is already 17. 18. 19.
 made; and that, whatever you *may have been*, you
have now withdrawn yourselves from the bondage of
 sin, and dedicated yourselves to a happier service.
 —Take, then, a review of your lives; and con- 20. 21.
 sider, whether any advantages accrued from sin,
 which were equivalent to its consequences—whether
 any of its enjoyments could counterbalance misery
 and death? Consider, also, whether you have any 22. 23.
 reason

reason to repent of these new engagements, which lead you through a life of holiness to everlasting happiness.

CHAP.
VII.

1. 2. 3. Having thus addressed myself to Christian converts in general, I now address myself particularly to the Jewish Christian. His attachment to the Mosaic law is exactly similar to the case of marriage; which is only an obligation till the death of one of the parties. So that the law, to which you were once espoused, being now dead, it is no more apostasy in you to receive the gospel, than it is adultery for a woman to be married to a second husband, after the death of a first. From the effect of those transgressions, which, under the Mosaic law, required legal atonement, you are now delivered: your services are transferred from carnal observances to spiritual attainments.
4. Does the law then, you ask, lead us into sin?—No otherwise than by giving us a more exact knowledge of it, and revealing to us God's commandments against it. Thus, for instance, I should never have known the guilt of covetousness, unless
5. 6. the law had said, *Thou shalt not covet*. For the guilt of sin is increased in proportion to the clearness of
7. the law against it. Had you been born Gentiles, you would have known less; and, of course, have
8. 9. 10. 11.

1. *As long as he liveth*. It should be translated, *as long as it liveth*, meaning the law.

sinned less. But the knowledge of the law introduced also the knowledge of sin. The law then is ^{12.13.14.} good; but it is our transgression of it which is the mischief. Our transgressions are all against know- ^{15.} ledge. The very witness of my conscience proves ^{16.17.18.} the excellency of the law. What is right, I know. ^{19.} The difficulty lies in the performance. In fact, through the corruption of my nature, I cannot fulfil the law. While I live in the world, I shall always ^{20.21.22.} experience the opposition between the law of God ^{23.} and the temptations of worldly things: and in the ^{24.} extremity of guilt, the Jew as well as the Gentile must cry out, Who will deliver me from this cruel bondage?

Here then comes in the gracious offer of the ^{25.} gospel, which alone holds out a remedy in our dis- ^{CHAP. VIII.} tress. That remission of sins, which the law could ^{1.} not provide, the gospel offers to all who live agree- ^{2.3.4.} ably to its precepts. We are freed from the effects of sin and death; and in the room of that perfect obedience which the law demands, the gospel graciously points out, through Christ, the humble en-

24. *Who will deliver me from the body of this death?* Some have thought that the apostle here alludes to the cruel custom often practised by tyrants, of tying dead bodies to those which are alive. It may be an apposite allusion, but I think hardly the apostle's meaning.

3. *And for sin condemned sin in the flesh.* This passage, which is scarcely sense, by an easy alteration, is very plain. *God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin (that is, as a sacrifice for sin) hath condemned, &c.*

deavours

5. 6. deavours of a spiritual life; to which its motives, aided by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, as naturally lead, as the motives of the world do to a carnal life: and this carnal life tends as directly to
7. 8. 9. misery, as the spiritual life does to happiness. For the worldly mind is always at enmity with God. It is the heavenly mind only that is pleasing to him: and if you live under the influence of God's holy Spirit, which dwells in you, you are then, and then
10. 11. only, of Christ's fold. In that blessed state, you are subject to no death, but a mere temporal dissolution; you are raised to life through the atonement of Christ. *His resurrection is an earnest of yours.*
12. 13. Be not then, my brethren, alive only to this world. Bury your sinful affections, that you may live for
14. ever. None are the children of God, but they
15. who are guided by his Spirit. All slavish notions in religion are removed. God graciously styles himself
16. 17. our Father. Let us then be his obedient children, and endeavour to attain that glorious inheritance, which is promised to those who renounce sin and vanity for his sake, and consider this world only as
18. a progress to the next.—And, indeed, what is the value of it? What proportion does your short time here bear to an eternity of happiness hereafter—

11. Mr. Locke supposes, that the apostle is not here speaking of the *resurrection*; but of that *principle of spiritual life* which we receive through the Spirit of God. And this indeed may perhaps be the better sense. There is great force, I think, in what Mr. Locke says. He translates ζωνομενη και, *shall quicken even*.

that

that great point, to which all the race of mankind
 have ever looked up with such anxious expectation?
 For there has ever been in mankind, lost as they
 are, yet formed originally for immortality, some
 heavenly spark of hope, that, after throwing off this
 fleshly incumbrance, they should become partakers
 of a more glorious state. The blind heathen ex-
 pected this state as well as we, who have the as-
 surance of it from God. We all live in hope. A
 state of enjoyment is not the state of this world:
 but a religious hope carries us through all its afflic-
 tions. In our infirmities we pray; and often ig-
 norantly: but the Holy Spirit of God suggests a
 language of the heart beyond the power of words—
 a language, which He who searcheth the heart will
 always graciously interpret.

Be assured, therefore, that whatever afflictions may
 befall you, the course of this world will always work
 out

19. I have applied this and the following verses to the heathen world, as Dr. Whitby and other learned commentators have done. Dr. Doddridge applies them to the whole creation. Either application, I think, makes good sense.—There is hardly a passage in the New Testament which has suffered more by translation than this; and yet it admits an easy solution by a different punctuation, and translating *on*, v. 21, into *that*, instead of *because*. *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, (for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same,) in hope, THAT the creature itself, &c.*

22. There is something very beautiful in thus introducing the whole creation, as if travelling in birth—throwing off the load of nature, and producing a new offspring from grace.

26. See a note on Luke x. 40.

28. The apostle here seems to address himself to the Gentile Christian; whom God, in his foreknowledge, decreed, should
 Vol. II. K be

- out good to those, who, having been called to the
29. blessings of the gospel, obey its precepts. Keep, therefore, this gracious call, which you have had continually in your minds. Remember always, that your heavenly Father, with a foreknowledge that comprehends all events, originally intended you to
30. be partakers of these blessings. You have been called; and if you obey that call, you shall in consequence be justified and glorified.—How, then,
31. ought these things to affect us? If God be with
32. us, what matters it who is against us? He who gave his only Son to die for our sins, we may rest assured, will deny us nothing that is proper for us.
33. 34. —Regard not, then, the opposition of those who would deprive you of these blessings. Who is he that condemneth? And who is *He* that justifieth? Make the comparison yourselves; and consider the love of Christ, who died for our sins, and now
35. 36. maketh intercession for us with God. Let nothing, then, in this world—not even its most formidable
37. 38. 39. terrors, interrupt the joys of religion: but let us triumph over its afflictions; persuading ourselves, that if our own endeavours are not wanting, nothing in this mortal state, neither the fears of death,

be called into the church of Christ; or, in St. Paul's language, *should be conformed to the image of his Son*. Mr. Parkhurst has examined all the passages in the New Testament, in which *προορίζω* (to predestinate) occurs. From a diligent attention to them, says he, the reader may determine for himself, whether in any one of them it has any relation to an absolute, unconditional predestination of particular persons to eternal salvation. See Park. Lex.

nor the enjoyments of life—neither wicked men, nor wicked spirits—neither adversity nor prosperity, can separate us from the love of God through Christ.

CHAP.

IX.

But however glorious an event the calling of the Gentiles may be, the rejection of the Jews is certainly a very melancholy one. It oppresses me with sorrow; and I should cheerfully devote myself to death, if my sufferings could be of service to that people—once so favoured—in covenant with God—the depositaries of his law—and above all, that honoured nation, which hath given birth to the Messiah.

1. 2. 3.

4. 5.

I mean not, however, to insinuate, that God had not entirely fulfilled his promises to the Jews. It was never *supposed*, that a bare descent from the patriarchs was the only title of a true Israelite; nor

6. 7. 8. 9.

3. The words of the original, *νυχομαι γαρ αυτος ενω αναδιασιν απο της Χριστης*, are variously interpreted. Some suppose an exclusion is meant only from the visible church of Christ. Others, among whom is the learned Dr. Whitby, take the words literally, as if the apostle really wished himself accursed; solving the harshness of the supposition, at the same time, by saying, the word *νυχομαι* signifies, *I could even wish*; that is, *if such a wish could be of any avail*.—Others make *απο της Χριστης* to signify *after the manner of Christ*.—After all, perhaps, as the words contain no doctrine, the apostle had no absolute precise meaning, but only shewed the ardour of his love by an earnest, hyperbolical mode of speaking.

5. No criticisms on the words of the original *Ο ου επι παντων*, &c. have been able, I think, to overthrow their force in proving the divinity of Christ. To give the argument, however, its full scope, examine Bowyer's conjectures on the place, who candidly states the authorities on which the opinions with regard to this text depend.

K 2

that

that the promise should extend to the Jews, merely as the children of Abraham. Abraham had many sons : but none of them inherited except Isaac. *Sarah shall have a son*, are the words of the promise : by which we are taught, that it was not merely a descent from Abraham that gave a title to it.—

10. 11. 12. The same selection was shewn in the case of Jacob.

13. The *national* blessings promised to Isaac, were continued to that patriarch, in preference to Esau.

14. What has the Jew then to object ? He was received, as descended from Isaac, in preference to Ishmael : can he then murmur at God's now accept-

15. 16. ing the *Gentile* on an equality with him ? Even his own lawgiver informs him, that God confers national blessings for his own wise reasons, and at his own good pleasure.—Thus also God takes his own time for punishing ; as he saith to Pharoah, I have exalted thee, for the very purpose of making thee

11. It is plain the *everlasting state* of Jacob and Esau, as *individuals*, is not here even hinted at. The passage plainly alludes to Gen. xxv. 23. *And the Lord said unto her ; Two nations are in thy womb ; and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels : and one people shall be stronger than the other people ; and the elder shall serve the younger.*

15. Exod. xxxiii. 19.

17. This passage alludes to Exod. ix. 16. which relates both to Pharoah and his people, whom God in that *public manner* plagued for their sins, as it is expressly said, *to make his name to be declared through all the earth.*

17. The word St. Paul uses is *ἐξήγαγα*, which literally, no doubt, signifies, as we translate it, *I have raised up* : but I think it may also, without any force, signify, *I have raised thee to thy power* ; or *I have given thee thy exaltation*.—The septuagint hath translated the Hebrew of Moses by the word *διὰ τῆς ἐξουσίας* ; which signifies, *thou hast been preserved* ; that is, kept alive under these plagues for this very purpose.

an instance of my power. Thus God assumes to 18.
himself, without explaining his reasons, the power
of conferring *national blessings* on some, and making
public examples of others.

You will perhaps then ask, Why God finds fault 19.
with the Jewish nation, who have only fulfilled his
will?—Every demand of this kind is impious. 20.
Nations in the hands of the Creator, are clay in the 21.
hands of the potter. Each vessel receives its proper
form, itself uninstructed in its maker's purpose.—

18. *Whom he will, he hardeneth.* It is evident from the whole
Mosaic history, that what God did to Pharoah tended naturally to
soften him; though Pharoah, like others sinners, turned those means
of *softening* into *hardening*: so that in God's agency here, one
step seems to be *funk*; and the *hardening* is made God's deed;
though in fact it was Pharoah's. Pharoah was a wicked prince.
God did not make him so, that he might be an instance of his
power; but being a wicked prince, God made him the *example* he
intended.

21. St. Paul's words allude manifestly to a passage of Jeremiah,
(xviii. 2.) which greatly illustrates them, as it has a plain refer-
ence—not to *individuals*, but to the *whole Jewish nation*. "Arise,
and go down to the potter's house. Then I went down to the
potter's house, and behold he wrought a work on the wheels.
And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of
the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to
the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me
saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter?
saith the Lord. Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are
ye in my hand, O house of Israel.—At what instant I shall
speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom to pluck
up, and to pull down, and to destroy it—if it do evil in my
fight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good
wherewith I said I would benefit them."—It is remarkable
also that in the contents prefixed to this chapter in our English
Bible, we are informed, that, *Under the type of a potter, is shewed*
God's absolute power in disposing of nations: which plainly shews,
that the reformers of those days did not draw this allegory to
countenance the doctrine often built on God's foreknowledge;
though, in general, they were not ill inclined to it.

22. Suppose God, to make his indignation against sin the more exemplary, hath reserved the impenitent Jews to be punished in one general or national rejection :
23. 24. suppose also, that to shew the extent of his grace, he hath taken the Gentiles, as well as us who be-
25. lieve, within the covenant of grace ; is this more than the prophet Hosea expressly tells us ? *I will call them my people who were not my people ; and her*
26. *beloved which was not beloved ;* that is, I will form a church among the Gentiles, where formerly it did
27. not exist.—But with regard to the salvation of individuals, doth not Isaiah speak with equal plainness ? *Though the people of Israel be as the sand of*
28. *the sea,—a remnant shall be left. The issues of the Lord's wrath, however decisive they may appear, shall*
29. *overflow with righteousness.* And again, *Except a remnant had been left, we should have been utterly*
30. 31. *destroyed, like Sodom and Gomorrha.*—Thus, then, the Gentiles have obtained justification by faith ; which the Jews in vain attempted to obtain by the
32. observances of their law. Salvation through faith in Christ was a stumbling-block to them, as the

25. Hosea i. 10.—ii. 23.

27. If. x. 22, 23.

29. If. i. 9.

30. In this verse the apostle seems to draw a conclusion from the whole. *What shall we say then ?* (What shall we conclude from these premises ?) why, that the Gentiles shall be called to partake of the gospel, while the unbelieving Jews are rejected. —From this conclusion of the argument, I think it still appears more plain, that the passages in this chapter, which have misled so many people, relate merely to this subject.

prophet had foretold it should be: *Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence; but whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

CHAP.

X.

And yet I hope and pray, that God will at length accept this hardened nation; which, after all, it must be acknowledged, hath a religious zeal. Ill directed it certainly is. Instead of obtaining justification in God's way, they attempt it in their own; not considering that their law is an introduction only to the gospel. And, indeed, unless we consider the language of Moses himself in this light, (as making the law an introduction to the gospel,) it would imply a sort of contradiction. In one passage, he speaks of the great difficulty of *observing* the law; as when he pronounces a curse on every man who does not obey it in all its parts. In another, he speaks of the removal of all difficulty, and of the *easiness* of *performance*: plainly intimating, that the harsh and impracticable terms of the law should, in time, be superseded by a covenant, which should offer salvation on the easier terms of faith †.

On

33. If. viii. 14.—xxviii. 16.

† I have endeavoured to give the scope of the apostle's meaning in this difficult passage; in which he applies the words of Moses, in the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses, to the gospel. Whoever compares Deut. xxvii. 26, or Levit. xviii. 5, with Deut. xxx. 12, 13, 14, which the apostle almost literally quotes, will see that Moses gives in these two several passages, very different representations. In one he speaks of the *difficulty*; in the other of the *easiness* of the law; and the apostle seems to apply these latter passages to the gospel. I dare not, however, lay much stress on this interpretation. All I can say, is, that I am dissatisfied with all the interpretations I have seen.—A friend gave me the follow-

K 4

ing

11. 12. On the whole, the tender of the gospel is universal. God makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile; but promises to receive into favour all
 13. who accept his gracious offer. *Whosoever, faith the prophet, shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall*
 14. 15. *be saved.*—As, therefore, God meant to make a gracious offer to the Gentiles, the necessity of *preach-*
 16. 17. *ing* the gospel to them immediately appears. And however inadequate the success; yet still, as preach-
 18. ing is the appointed mean, it must of course be every
 19. where continued and extended. Let the Jews, therefore, recollect some of the predictions of their prophets on this head. Moses tells them, *they should be*
 20. *moved to jealousy by the nations they despised;*—and Isaiah represents the Almighty discovering himself

ing explication of these difficult verses; of which the reader may judge.—As Moses warned the Jews not to suffer their faith and practice to languish from any pretended obscurity which they might say veiled the word of God from their eyes; for it was “nigh them, even in their mouth, and in their heart”—so do I, says the apostle, warn you against such infidelity with regard to the acknowledgment of Christ. You have seen him come down from above—You have seen him rise from the dead. Do not therefore say, who shall bring Christ from heaven, or who shall bring him from the dead? But confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart, that God hath raised him from the dead

13. Joel ii. 32.

14. The preaching here meant is the *apostolic mode* of preaching, attended by miraculous powers. Preaching the gospel among heathen nations by simple missionaries, without these marks of a divine commission, was what the apostles never attempted. After the gospel was fully established, it appears to have been the design of Providence to bring about the conversion of heathen nations by the gradual progress of civilization, which seems at this time to be working in all parts of the world. Nor is the badness of the instruments, in some parts, any objection: God works with instruments of every kind.

19. Deut. xxxii. 21.

20. Is. lxi. 1.

to nations that knew him not; and taxing the Jews 21.
with their obstinacy and infidelity.

CHAP.
XI.

We must not, however, suppose the Jews are
totally cast off. God forbid, that I should use such
language towards that nation, with which I must
ever consider myself connected. God, who fore-
knows all things, will not entirely cast them off.
Elijah formerly cried out, *Lord, they have killed thy
prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left
alone; and they seek my life also.* But recollect what
answer God returns: *There are yet seven thousand in
Israel, who have not bowed the knee to Baal.* We
consider the Jews in the same situation now. Though
as a nation they are rejected; yet many individuals
are in a state of grace. But they must ever remem-
ber, that *it is* a state of grace; and that their salva-
tion is not derived from any merit of their own per-
formances. Such only meet the acceptance of God,
whose salvation is derived from Christ. All who
reject this mode of salvation, are in that state of
hardened guilt, which the prophet describes by *eyes
that see not, by ears that hear not*, and other circum-
stances which denote great perverseness and infidelity.
God forbid, however, that we should consider the
Jews as utterly lost. Let us rather hope, that by the
call of the Gentiles, they may, in the end, be in-
cited to embrace that offer which they now reject.

21. Is. lxxv. 2.

3. 1 Kings xix. 14.

4. 1 Kings xix. 18.

7. So I should explain what St. Paul here calls *election*.

And

12. And as their loss has been the gain of the Gentile world; their recovery will be matter of joy to all
 13. Christians. I glory in being the apostle of the Gen-
 14. tiles; yet still must I earnestly strive to promote
 15. the salvation of my own countrymen; and repeat,
 16. that their conversion will be matter of great joy to
 the whole Christian world. The Jewish nation must
 always be considered as the root from which Chris-
 17. tianity springs. You Gentiles are only grafts upon
 18. 19. that ancient stock. From it your nourishment arose.
 You are ingrafted where the original branches were
 20. broken off. Take care, therefore, lest that infide-
 lity which destroyed them be not also destructive to
 21. you. If the natural branches were not spared, much
 less reason have you to hope, who are only ingrafted
 22. 23. branches.—And now observe how amiably, and
 yet how awfully, the kindness and severity of God
 are tempered together—kindness to you, and severity
 to the impenitent Jews. May you both improve
 under a just sense of these holy dispensations! Take
 you care not to change the kindness of God into
 severity: and let them endeavour to avert that
 severity, and change it into kindness. God's mer-
 24. cies will ever be tender towards them. They are

16. *If the first-fruit be holy, the lump also is holy.* This alludes to the offering of the first-fruits; which made the harvest to be esteemed clean. Thus the apostle considers the Jewish economy as the first-fruits of that holiness which was introduced by Christianity. Unless the first-fruit had been holy, neither could the whole body of revealed religion, which was connected with it, have been holy.

the

the ancient branches ; and may therefore more readily be ingrafted upon their old stock. In the spirit ^{25.26.27.} of prophecy, we foresee a time, after the conversion of the Gentile world shall be effected, when all Israel shall be gathered into the fold of Christ. Hitherto ^{28.} your obedience hath taken the place of their infidelity : but God will never forget his covenant with their fathers ; nor repent the promises he made to their posterity. Once you were in a state of infidelity ; but were enlightened by them : they are now ^{29.} in that state themselves ; and shall hereafter be enlightened by you. Thus all the world, both Jews ^{30.} and Gentiles, each infidel by turns, shall finally be the objects of God's mercy. — How wonderful are ^{31.} the effects of his wisdom and knowledge ! To us ^{32.} his ways are wholly inscrutable. It is evident we are indebted to ourselves for nothing. To him, therefore, be ascribed, from all his creatures, that glory which is due for ever ! Amen. ^{33.}

CHAP.
XII.

Let me exhort you, therefore, my brethren, to live worthy of this holy call. Whether Jews or Gentiles, relinquish entirely your former rites ; and in their room, offer to God each his own body, as a ^{34. 35.} living sacrifice, cleansed from the pollutions of the world, and purified by holy affections. — Nor on ^{36.}

28. *As touching the election, they are beloved for their fathers' sakes.* This expression seems to point out the apostle's idea in the 9th chapter. Who, says he, were the objects of *election* ? Not this, or that individual, but the whole Jewish nation, who are beloved for the sake of their fathers. The argument, therefore, seems to be, that the Jewish nation, which *was rejected*, will again be *elect* : that is, taken within the pale of Christianity.

the other hand, let your spiritual endowments create any pride or jealousy among you. The church of Christ, like the human body, consists of various members; and each member hath its respective
 4 5 6 7 8. use. One interprets scripture; another* bears some office in the church; a third is engaged in teaching; a fourth distributes the public charity; a fifth takes
 9. 10. charge of the sick and stranger. Whatever the employment be, let undissembled love preside: and shew the sincerity of that love by your readiness, on
 11. all occasions, to prefer others to yourselves. Be active, also, and vigilant; always remembering that
 12. heavenly Master whom you serve. Let your future hopes overbalance your present distresses; and let trust in God and constant prayer be your support.
 13. 14. 15. When a charitable office of any kind is in your
 16. power, never fail to perform it. Prayers and good wishes, at least, are always in your power: at all times, you ought to enter tenderly into the feelings of others: and let the lowest of the people engage
 17. 18. 19. your attention as well as the highest.—But beware of self-sufficiency. Let all your dealings be honest, and fair, and open, in the sight of all men. Of ma-

13. The apostle *here* mentions hospitality, which duly defined, is certainly a virtue *every where*; but in those countries where places of entertainment were not always to be met with, it was a more necessary virtue than in such a country as this, where many things take the name of *hospitality* which have no pretensions to it. The apostle defines it by the expression, *distributing to necessity*; which is certainly the only true definition of it. You *give alms* to those who are in *indigence*; you are *hospitable* to those who, though not in indigence, are under some temporary *necessity*, from which you can relieve them.

lice, in every shape, divest yourselves. Live peaceably and inoffensively towards all men; and if any man injure you, by no means retaliate. Return good for evil; and leave your cause in the hands of God. Endeavour, if possible, by acts of kindness, to make 20. 21. your enemy a friend.

CHAP.
XIII.

As to the affairs of civil government, the Christian religion leaves them just as it found them. It 1. 2. 3. 4. claims no authority in matters of this kind; only, in general, inculcates the necessity of obedience. Civil government is of God's appointment. The constitution of this world requires it. It is necessary to awe the guilty and protect the innocent. He, therefore, who opposes civil government, opposes God. Let the Christian, therefore, only differ 5. from other subjects, in shewing that obedience from *conscience* which they shew from *fear*†. Taxes, 6. 7.

† These cautions are chiefly given to the Jewish converts, many of whom still thought the *chosen people of God* were subject only to his government; and had nothing to do with heathen governments. The apostle's instructions, therefore, respect not *this* or *that mode* of government, but government in *general*; and cannot with any propriety be brought to support the slavish doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. The Christian, in his *civil capacity*, like other men, will act as his judgment directs; only his religion, which gives him many new principles, will direct his judgment better; and in this matter, as in all others, will give him more modesty and forbearance.

6. The refusal of paying taxes was the origin of the rebellion of Judas of Galilee; from whom Christians had often the name of Galileans given them by the heathen, and were represented as a people hostile to all government, and its necessary supports. St. Paul therefore studiously obviates this slander.—It was under an idea of this kind, that the Jews brought to our Saviour the question about tribute-money.

also,

- also, are the necessary support of government. Let these, together with a proper respect to all in authority, be duly paid. And be assured, that he will always be the best subject who is the best Christian. For that universal benevolence which Christianity prescribes, will the most effectually prevent the transgression of every law; and, of course, the most effectually fulfil it.—We Christians have motives beyond all other people to draw us to our duty.
- 12.13.14. The night of this world is well nigh over. We consider the day as beginning to dawn. Let us then lay aside whatever relates to darkness; and make preparation only for the approaching light.

CHAP.

XIV.

1. 2. 3. 4. One point more let me insist on. As the Christian church among you consists both of Jewish and Gentile converts, let all uncharitable animosities with regard to religious opinions be laid aside.

13. Some whimsical interpreters translate κοιταίς (which we translate *chambering*) *lying in bed in a morning*. It is certain, if there be no direct precept in scripture to enforce early rising, it may easily be inferred. An hour or two gained in a morning, makes a greater difference in a life-time than one should easily suppose, without making a calculation.

14. How strongly the apostle expresses his sense, in saying, *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*. Be ye clothed, as it were, with him. Plutarch tells us, that the kings of Persia always put on, at their coronation, the robe of Cyrus, by way of shewing the people they intended to imitate his virtues.

1. Μὴ ἐν διακρίσεως διαλογισμοῖς, should be rather, *not to form judgments of his thoughts*; than, as our version has it, *not to doubtful disputations*.

3. By *him that eateth*, the apostle probably means the less scrupulous Gentile; and by *him that eateth not*, the more scrupulous Jew.

He

He who makes no distinction among meats, ought not to despise him who is more scrupulous, and cannot at once lay his scruples aside. We are not accountable to man; and in the sight of a gracious God, these externals are of little consequence.—

Thus again, he who makes no distinction among days, should treat his brother, who does make a distinction, with the same forbearance. For I trust that every one of you, in these things, follows the dictates of his conscience; not acting on any sinister motive; but from a sense of that obligation to religious duty, which the death and resurrection of his blessed Saviour have laid upon him.—Lay aside, therefore, all uncharitableness about these indifferent matters; and leave your brother's conduct to the judgment of God, who will call us all to a righteous account. Instead, therefore, of being offended at the conduct of others, take care to be inoffensive in your own. I am myself persuaded that a Christian may safely eat any kind of food; but he who is not so persuaded ought to refrain. And even he who hath no scruple of his own, ought by no means to give offence to him who hath one; nor subject the holy religion he professes to any uncharitable aspersion. For though the spirit of the gospel is little concerned in these indifferent matters; yet it is very essentially concerned in maintaining peace, and charity, and happiness among Christians. These are the things which make you useful to each other, and acceptable to God.—Cultivate,

- then, this peaceable disposition, as the best mean of
 20. mutual improvement. For however indifferent these
 things may be in themselves ; yet, as he acts wrong,
 who, in the merest trifle, acts against his conscience ;
 21. so, of course, he acts equally wrong, who thus turns
 22. 23. a trifle into a matter of offence. Be satisfied, then,
 with the liberty you allow yourselves ; only be careful
 that religion and conscience allow it likewise ; for in
 CHAP. all cases of this kind, *doubt is guilt.*
 XV.

- Nor is it only in the matter of meats, but in every
 1. 2. 3. thing else, you should be ready to bear with the
 weaknesses of others. Remember the blessed ex-
 ample of our Saviour. Remember how particularly
 marked it is by the prophets for a humble and
 charitable submission to the weaknesses of others.
 4. Learn, then, from these great characters, thus marked
 by the prophets, and fulfilled by Christ, those prin-
 ciples of Christian charity, which are the foundation
 5. of all your hopes. And may God Almighty enable
 6. you to reduce them to practice ; that your petitions
 to God may ascend from hearts full of love to each
 7. other !——In a word, shew that affection to each
 8. other, which Christ shewed to us all. Let the
 Gentile respect the Jew ; as Christ was, in a peculiar
 manner, the Messiah of the Jews, by fulfilling the

23. Our translation expresses the original too strongly. *He that doubteth, is damned if he eat.* The apostle only means to express the wrongness of any action about which we doubt. *Damned* should be translated *condemned* ; or in his own conscience convicted.

predictions of their prophets. And let the Jew ^{9. 10. 11.}
 respect the Gentile; as he equally fulfils the predic- ^{12.}
 tions of the same prophets; who have with one
 voice notified his gracious call to the blessings of
 the gospel.—God grant that you may all believe ^{13.}
 the great truths of the gospel; and rejoice in its
 blessed hopes, with unanimity and peace! And ^{14.}
 though I doubt not your kindness to each other, even
 among your religious differences; yet, as your apos- ^{15.}
 tle, I thought it right to mention these things.
 Like the priest of the Jewish law, I consider myself ^{16.}
 as offering to God the sacrifice of the Gentile world.
 But all glorying, with regard to myself, is totally ^{17. 18.}
 suppressed by a sense of God's grace, under which I
 act. My own power is nothing. I act merely by ^{19.}
 the power of God; which hath enabled me by mi-
 racles to spread the gospel through many of the
 countries of Greece; in all which I have applied ^{20. 21.}
 myself to those only, who had never heard of the
 gospel before, that I might take all the labour to
 myself; and, according to the prophet, preach to
 such as had never been instructed.

On this account, my design of visiting you hath ^{22.}
 hitherto been prevented; though I hope I shall soon ^{23. 24.}
 see you, as my ministry in these parts is now finished.
 I mean to take a journey into Spain; and I propose

9. 10. 11. 12. The prophecies here referred to, which announce
 the call of the Gentiles, are Ps. xviii. 49. Deut. xxxii. 43.
 Ps. cxvii. 1. Isa. xi. 10.

21. Is. lii. 15.

to visit you in my way thither, both that I may gratify my own affection and yours; and that I may receive your assistance in proceeding farther.

25.26.27. But I shall go first to Jerusalem. The Greek Christians have raised a contribution for their poor brethren there, and I shall go thither to present it.

28.

When I shall have disposed of this charity, (if I may call by that name what, in a spiritual light, is indeed rather a debt,) I shall immediately begin my

29. journey to Spain; and I doubt not but I shall have reason to meet you in all the fulness of apostolic

30.31.32. love.—In the mean time, my brethren, unite with me in prayer, that I may be protected in all difficulties and dangers arising from unbelievers—that I

29. Who can help admiring, with what ease the holy apostle, now advanced in years, talks of travelling, not from one town or district to another, but from continent to continent? When St. Paul wrote this epistle, he was most probably at Corinth, and proposed first to go to Jerusalem, and from thence by Rome into Spain. In what way this journey was undertaken, we are not given to understand. If the whole of it were performed by sea, at the lowest calculation it must have extended three thousand miles: if by land, almost double that space. But, however performed, we cannot suppose it to have been very commodious. If we judge from the apostle's general account of his travels, the difficulties which he encountered, both by sea and land, must have been very great. "In journeyings often—in perils of water—in perils of robbers—in perils in the sea—in perils in the wilderness. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A day and a night I have been in the deep. In weariness and painfulness—in watchings often—in hunger and thirst; in cold and nakedness." 2 Cor. xi. 26, &c.

Good God, enable the present ministers of thy word to keep these labours of thy holy apostle so far at least in view, as to prevent their considering many things in their profession as insuperable difficulties, which to him would not have appeared in the light of inconveniences!

may

may perform my commission acceptably at Jerusalem
—and meet you, through God's will, in peace and
love. And may the God of peace be with you all : 33.
Amen.

I commend to your particular attention the bearer
of this epistle, Phœbe, a deaconess of the church of
Cenchrea, who hath been of great service to many
here, and to myself in particular. I desire also to be 3—15.
remembered, with kind affection, to all the brethren
with you, whose various services are highly accept-
able to me : and may that affection which I shew to 16.
you, spread equally among yourselves !

Avoid communication with such persons as teach 17.18.19.
any doctrine contrary to what you have received ;
and let not their interested and deceitful views impose
upon you. The purity of your conversion is every
where mentioned ; and I hope you will not suffer the 20.
artifices of designing men to mislead you. God's
Holy Spirit will support your endeavours ; and may
the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ever rest upon
you !—All the brethren here salute you. 21.22.23.

1. Cenchrea was a village near Corinth.

15. In these verses the apostle, with an engaging condescension, enumerates these brethren by name, which must have been a very pleasing remembrance to them ; though to us, at this day, it is less interesting.—Among others whom the apostle salutes, are Priscilla and Aquila, *who had for his life laid down their own necks*. See an account of their being with him during the persecution he suffered in Greece. Acts xviii. &c.

16. The *holy kiss* mentioned in this verse was a Jewish custom. It seems to have given early occasion of offence in the Christian church, and was therefore laid aside.

24.25.26. May all the earth, Jews and Gentiles, join in
27. praise to that God, through whose goodness, the predictions of the prophets being all fulfilled, the whole world is blessed with the gospel of Christ.

25. The word *mystery*, which is used by the apostle in the 25th verse, is generally interpreted to mean, the *calling of the Gentiles*, and the enlightening of the whole world by Christianity. See the word used in the same sense, Ephes. iii. 4. 9. and Col. i. 26, 27.

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

FIRST AND SECOND

EPISTLES to the CORINTHIANS.

CORINTH was a city of Achaia, seated on that neck of land, which joined Peloponnesus to the rest of Greece. Its situation, on two seas, was well adapted to commerce; and made it one of the wealthiest cities in the world. But wealth had the effect there which it always has; and Corinth, as it increased in opulence, increased also in dissipation and wickedness. To this city the labours of St. Paul were directed: and here, amidst all the profligacy and corrupt manners of the place, he founded a Christian church; and through his influence, drew over many converts to the truth. To complete this great work, he continued at Corinth two years.

Three years after he left it, he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, as it is generally supposed, from Ephesus; the greater part of which appears to be an answer to several questions they had put to him.

The apostle first expresses his happiness in the general adherence of his converts to their religion, page 153—he

finds fault with their divisions, 154—gives them a plain idea of the gospel, opposed chiefly to the philosophy of the world, 154—vindicates his own mode of preaching it; and shews, that a knowledge of its divine truths can never be attained, without the assistance of the Spirit of God—and that divisions and worldly ideas are wholly opposite to it, 156—he touches on the life of an apostle, from which he infers his own sincerity, 161—he rebukes them on the account of an incestuous person, whom he excommunicates; giving them some instructions with regard to their heathen neighbours, 163—he gives them rules with regard to their worldly disputes, 164—and cautions them against the vices and impurities to which they had been formerly addicted, 166—The apostle proceeds next to answer several questions that had been put to him. The first relates to marriage; particularly between Christians and heathen. The discussion of this question is contained in the seventh chapter.—In the three next chapters he answers a second question; Whether it be lawful for Christians to eat meats offered to idols in an idol-temple? He first, in the eighth chapter, shews the inexpediency of it, as it may mislead weak Christians. In the ninth, he gives an example in himself of many things which he avoids as inexpedient. In the tenth, he shews how an attachment to these idol-feasts had led the Jews formerly into sin: they *sat down to eat and drink*, at the sacrifices of idols, and then *rose up to play*; or to commit fornication. He then points out to his converts, that Christians might in the same way be led from eating in idol-temple to the practice of heathen abominations. At the fifteenth verse, the apostle uses a new argument, shewing the impropriety of eating in an idol-temple; as the sign of communicating with an idol is the same as that of communicating with Christ; namely, eating at his table. The apostle concludes his argument with shewing, at the twenty-fifth

fifth verse, in what circumstances idol-meats may lawfully be eaten.—In the eleventh chapter, two points are discussed—the first relates to the behaviour of women in public assemblies; the second, beginning at the seventeenth verse, to the improper celebration of the Lord's supper.—It appears, from the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters, that the chiefs of the Corinthian church were suffering emulation and strife to creep in among their spiritual labours; and particularly, that they were fond of displaying the gift of tongues. All these improprieties the apostle represses.—In the fifteenth chapter, he explains the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; on which subject many erroneous opinions had been entertained among Corinthian converts.—In the last chapter, he gives instructions about their collections for the poor; and then concludes.

On the reading of this epistle at Corinth, the incestuous person was excommunicated; and many, from his example, were brought to a sense of their duty. Yet still the apostle found opposition. He had promised, after his journey to Macedonia, to visit Corinth: but finding the Corinthian converts still in such disorder, that he could not appear among them, without exerting more severity than he chose, he postponed his journey. This occasioned new grounds of opposition. The apostle was represented as an unsteady man.—This was the state of the Corinthian church, when he wrote his second epistle, about a year after he had written the former. He introduces it with an account of the sufferings he had lately undergone; and of his sincerity in preaching the gospel, 197—he then gives the reason of his writing, instead of visiting them, as he had intended, 198—he forgives the incestuous person, 200—professes his great affection for his converts, 200—dwells on the diffi-

culty and yet dignity of preaching the gospel; the views and hopes and worldly distresses that attend it, 201—of the universality of the gospel; and of the seeming contradictions which are reconciled in it, 205—exhorts his converts to separate entirely from all heathen practices, 207—expresses his regard for the attention they paid to his last epistle, 208—reminds them to make collections for the poor; and gives them an account of the disciples he sends to them, 210—vindicates himself; and speaks of his own labours in the gospel, and of his power to punish his adversaries, 214—raises his character among them, by a recital of the visions he had had, 218—vindicates himself still farther; and concludes, 219.

FIRST EPISTLE

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

CHAP.

I.

PAUL, (by the particular appointment of God,
an apostle of Jesus Christ,) together with Sosthenes, to the Christian church at Corinth, and to all other Christians—grace and peace from God in Christ!

Your happy conversion to the Christian religion, and your having been so bountifully endowed with those gifts, through which your faith was at first confirmed, are among the chief subjects of my thankfulness to God. That communication which you enjoy, of these divine blessings, will be, I trust, sufficient to preserve you pure unto the great day of our Lord. Be faithful on your parts; and you may

1.

2.

3.

4.

5. 6.

7. 8.

9.

2. The expression, *all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ*, seems to point him out as an object of worship.

be assured of the acceptance of that God, who hath called you to salvation by his Son.

10. 11. But though, in general, I thus commend you, I must, at the same time, reprove several of you for the various divisions, which, I hear, are subsisting among you; and which are very opposite to the
 12. spirit of the gospel. You are dividing into different sects—one under Paul—another under Apollos—and
 13. a third under Peter.—Do you then suppose there is any diversity in the religion of the gospel? Did Paul die for your sins? Or were you baptized in
 14. 15. 16. his name? As this is the case, I am truly glad I baptized so few among you. Crispus and Gaius, and the family of Stephanus, are all that I remember. So that there can be no pretence for saying
 17. I baptized in my own name. For I was commissioned not so much to baptize, as to preach the gospel in simplicity and truth.
 18. The simplicity of the cross, indeed, which hath ever been my subject, though it is the great foundation of all our hopes, is little understood by worldly

10. The apostle passes here without any interruption from commendation to blame. His sense is easy: but a modern ear requires some such connecting sentence as I have here introduced.

12. Many commentators suppose the latter clause of the sentence, *and I of Christ*, is an interpolation. The sense, indeed, seems better without it: for all the Corinthian converts, no doubt, listed *under Christ*, but held his doctrines under different leaders.—Mr. Markland, instead of *Christus*, would read *Crispus*.

men.

men. To them the prophet alludes, when he says, 19.
Behold, I will do a marvellous thing among this people.
The wisdom of their wise men shall perish; and the
understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.—
 To what end, indeed, does the philosophy and wis- 20.
 dom of this world lead us? When it pretends to
 conduct us in religious matters, it is vanity and
 folly. For after the world had, through ages, 21.
 shewn its weakness and ignorance in acquiring di-
 vine truth, it pleased God at once, through the
 simplicity of the gospel, to display his heavenly
 wisdom, and to offer salvation to all who were
 disposed to receive it. But the wisdom of the 22.
 world, as I observed, is little adapted to this divine
 knowledge. The unbelieving Jew views the Messiah
 only as a temporal prince; and the Greek listens
 merely to such instructions as are decked with the
 refinements of philosophy: while the doctrine of the 23. 24.
 gospel, which lies in these few words, *Christ was cru-*
cified for sinners, however offensive to both, will be
 found, on just examination, their truest wisdom. For 25.
 simple as the great designs of Providence may ap-

19. Isa. xxix. 14.

21. This is the same sentiment on which the apostle only dilated more in the first chapter of the Romans.

22. In the text it is, *the Jews require a sign*. In our Saviour's time they were always requiring a sign. And in the time of the apostles, it seems they were still making the same requisition. What kind of signs they were now in quest of, their countryman Josephus tells us. False Christs, says he, deceived the people by promising them *σημεία και δυνάμεις*, *the signs of deliverance from the Romans*.

24. The text perhaps applies the power of God to the Jews; and the wisdom of God to the Greeks.

- pear, the utmost wisdom of man is feeble, when it
 26.27.28. presumes to judge of them.—And hence it is,
 that so few of the philosophers and wise men of this
 world have embraced the gospel; while through the
 29. goodness of God, its great truths are open to men
 of plain understanding, of teachable minds, and of
 good dispositions. And this is ordered in such a way,
 that all the serious part of mankind may know that
 the hand of man hath had nothing to do in this
 great work; but that it was planned and conducted
 30. solely by God.—You then, my brethren, are justified,
 sanctified, and redeemed through Christ; and
 having given up the wisdom of the world, and accepted,
 31. through God's goodness, Christ for your wisdom, shall be among those of whom the prophet

CHAP. speaks, *Let them that glory, glory in the Lord.*

11.

1. 2.

For myself, I ever preached the gospel in its true simplicity. All the arts of worldly wisdom I have disclaimed. *Jesus Christ, crucified for sinners,*

27. 28. St. Paul's doctrine here seems the same as in Luke viii. 15. *But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having, &c.*

31. Jer. ix. 23, 24.

1. *Declaring unto you the testimony of God:* that is, the proof of religion from the prophecies of the Old Testament and from miracles.

2. The idea of a *crucified redeemer*, was the great stumbling-block. On it therefore, as the foundation-stone, the apostle lays the greatest stress. It is said to have given equal offence in China; and some authors relate, that the Jesuit missionaries there finding how ill it was received, denied that Jesus Christ had been crucified; asserting, it was an aspersion of the Jews. This charge against the Jesuits, whether true or not, Archbp. Tillotson seems to have believed. See vol. iii. p. 248.—The words, *καὶ τὸς ἐσταυρωμένον*, might be translated, *even that crucified person.*

has

has been my constant subject ; and I have preached 3.
 this among you, with all the tenderness and anxiety
 which a serious pastor will always feel. Instead of 4. 5.
 the arts of philosophy, I have enforced this great
 doctrine by the demonstration of the Spirit ; and
 have shewn you, that your faith does not rest on
 any thing human, but on prophecy and miracles,
 which are derived from God. The gospel is wisdom 6.
 indeed ; but of a different kind from the perishing
 wisdom of men. Though hid through ages, it 7.
 was determined from the beginning of the world.
 But even after it was opened, it escaped the discern- 8.
 ment of the Jewish doctors, or they would never
 have crucified their Messiah.—But it is no won- 9.
 der ; for the divine truths it teaches, are conveyed
 to us in a manner wholly different from every kind
 of knowledge which we receive through our senses
 —even by the Spirit of God, which alone can 10.
 fathom his designs. As the spirit of a man only 11.
 can search the secrets of his own heart, so nothing but
 God's own Spirit can explain the ways of his pro-
 vidence. This Spirit we have received. From its 12. 13.
 influence, not from worldly science, our knowledge
 arises : and through it we explain the free grace of

9. This passage, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard*, &c. is generally applied to the happiness of a future state. It is no doubt a noble description of that happiness, and very applicable to it ; but the context here certainly affixes a different sense to it. — It is generally supposed to allude to *Is. lxiv. 4.* With regard to the difficulties attending this supposition, see *Bp. Lowth's* note on the passage.

- God—not in the terms of philosophy ; but in the language of the Holy Ghost ; shewing you, that the same divine Spirit, which spake by the holy prophets of old, now speaks in the gospel.—But mere un-
14. assisted reason could never discern these things. He
15. only, who is assisted by God's Spirit, can discern them. The mere natural man continually makes false judgments both of men and things. For as the prophet says, *Who hath known the mind of the*
16. *Lord?* None, surely, but whom the Lord hath instructed. So none can explain the will of God in Christ, but such as are under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

CHAP.

III.

1. 2.

- But perhaps you may think, I have not opened to you (as others have done) the sublimer doctrines of religion.—You are yet unable to bear them. As the new-born babe cannot be fed with strong food, but must, at first, be sustained with milk ; so
3. 4. have I been obliged to treat you. You have not yet attained the spirit of the gospel. These envyings,

15. Solomon's sentiment is nearly the same as the apostle's: *Evil men understand not judgment ; but they that seek the Lord, understand all things.* Prov. xxviii. 5.

16. The apostle alludes here either to Isaiah xl. 13, or to Jerem. xxiii. 18.

3. 4. On reading these passages, we are immediately struck with the seeming impropriety of their having received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, (as it plainly appears they had from the 12th and 14th chapters,) though they had not yet attained the spirit of the gospel. But it is evident from various parts of scripture, that there were two distinct operations of the Holy Spirit—one, as it related to the edification of the church ; the other, as it regarded the sanctification of the individual : and sometimes one alone, and sometimes

ings, strifes, and party-divisions among you, under Paul and Apollos, plainly shew that your conversion is not yet complete. Are Paul and Apollos, think you, more than mere ministers of the gospel? I first planted it among you, and Apollos succeeded to my labours: but neither he nor I are more than mere labourers under God, engaged in the same employment, and equally accountable. We are all fellow-workmen: God is our master; and you are the land we cultivate: or, to use another allusion, you are the building which I have founded; the superstructure I leave to others. The foundation can be laid only in Christ. He who moveth that, engageth entirely in a new building. And as to the superstructure, whether it be good or bad, let the workman awfully await the issue of that great day, which shall bring his work to the test. If it be found suitable to the foundation, it is well: he will meet his reward. But if it be found the reverse, his

5.

6.

7.

8.

9. 10.

11.

12.

13. 14.

15.

sometimes both together, resided in the same person. Balaam and Judas Iscariot were notorious instances of the first case; the gifts of the Spirit residing in them for the advantage of the church, without the conveyance of any sanctifying grace. To this case also St. Paul alludes: *I though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

9. Συμψυχοι Θεοῦ, mean rather, fellow-labourers under God; than, as translated, labourers together with God.

13. This is very coldly translated. It should not be *the day*; but *that day*, or *the great day*. — Fire seems to be considered in this passage, not in allusion to any great eternal fire, but merely as a test. As fire is the test of gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; so the great day will be the test of every man's work.

15. St. Jude (ver. 23.) uses the same metaphor: *Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.*

work

work perishes; and he himself also, unless his good intentions may plead to save him.

16. Consider farther, that the Christian church is now substituted in the room of the Jewish. *It* is now the temple of God. *Here* God's Holy Spirit rests, as it did *there*. Consider, then, the great danger of injuring the holy temple of God by your divisions; and reflect, that you yourselves are now the members which constitute that holy temple. Be not then
17. deceived by the wisdom of this world. He who would rest his knowledge on that foundation which I have described, must be contented to unlearn much of what he knows, before he arrive at the simplicity of the gospel; in comparison of which, the wisdom of this world is folly. For *the wise*, we are told,
18. *are taken in their own craftiness*; and again, *the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain*.
19. —Let there be an end, therefore, of all boasting,
20. and glorying in this or that leader. You have higher aims. All your instructors in religion, all your possessions in this world, and hopes in the next,
21. should lead you only to one great point—that holy connection which you have with Christ, and through him, with God.

17. The word *φθίσει* in this verse is repeated; and is translated first *defiled*, and afterwards *destroyed*; both which senses it will bear: but to preserve the figure, it should be confined to one. The idea seems to be, that Christians, as a body, composed the temple of God. Divisions among them is a disunion among the parts of the temple. The consequence is, the destruction of the whole.

19. See Job v. 13. and Ps. xciv. 11.

22. With what elevation of faith does the apostle here consider *death* among the *possessions* of a Christian!

Even we, who are the appointed apostles of the gospel, look upon ourselves in no higher light than as the stewards of our blessed Lord. For myself, if I be found faithful in my office, it is all I desire.

As to the censures passed on me by others, they have little weight with me. I am more inclined to join them in censuring myself. For though I am not conscious of having neglected my apostolic trust, yet my own sentiments are no justification of my actions.

—Let us not, then, be forward in passing censures on each other; but leave all judgment to that time, when a very different light shall be thrown on the characters of men, from any they now receive: when the motives of our actions shall be examined, and every man's real deserts appear in the sight of God.

Thus I have said what I wish to say to you on your several divisions, and the consequences of them. I have not mentioned names, but have substituted my own, and those of Apollos and Peter, that I might not too openly point at any one; and that your party-leaders may reflect, that if *we* disclaim any separate authority, much more should *they*. Let them humble themselves, therefore; and consider the gifts they have received as given them by God.

4. Οὐδὲν ἐμαυτῷ συνίδω signifies rather *I am not conscious*; than as it is translated, *I know nothing by myself*.

6. I have endeavoured to pursue the connection here as well as I could, though the text is somewhat obscure. As to the sentence beginning with *and*, that copulative is frequent, when it is merely an expletive.

8. Sincerely do I wish those high pretensions of yours were founded in truth; and that I might change my anxious, suffering state for your secure and happy one. Look at us, the apostles of Christ. Who can see us in any other light, than as spectacles prepared for the ridicule and cruelty of the world?
- 9.
10. While we are fools, in the general estimation of men, you join worldly prudence and the cross together; while we are weak, you are strong; while you are
11. 12. honoured, we are despised. Examine the life of an apostle. See the distresses of all kinds to which we
13. are exposed—even to the want of the very necessities of life, which we endeavour to supply with the labour of our hands: bearing the many indignities we receive, not only with patience, but with a dis-
14. 15. position to return good for evil.—I mention not, however, these things to distress you; but to revive in you that tenderness, which is due from children to a parent. I was the first who opened the gospel to you; and have certainly the first claim to your
16. attention.—And that you may be fully confirmed
17. in that faith, which I once delivered unto you, and preach in all the churches, I send my beloved Timothy unto you with this epistle, who is, in all respects,
18. a faithful minister of our blessed Lord. My thus sending a substitute may contribute to excite divisions still more among you, on a supposition that I mean

8. *Reigning as kings* seems to refer to the influence these leaders had obtained over the people.

not to come myself. But be assured, I do mean to
 come myself; and shall examine, not the philosophy
 and worldly wisdom—but the gospel-spirit and tem-
 per of such as oppose us. For it is not the learning
 of men, but the fruits of the Spirit, that make the
 true Christian.—You have an option, therefore,
 whether I shall come among you with the mildness
 of a father, or with the power of an apostle.

CHAP.
V.

Having thus censured your various divisions, I
 shall now censure you still more on another head.
 I hear there hath been practised among you a very
 enormous kind of wickedness, which is not heard
 of even among Gentiles—that one of you hath had
 a connection with his father's wife; and that others,
 instead of making it a general cause of mourning,
 and separating themselves from so vile a person,
 seem rather to defend him in his wickedness.—
 Though absent, I take upon me, through the au-
 thority of the Holy Ghost, to decide in this matter.
 I command, therefore, that, on the receipt of this

21. The expression, *shall I come unto you with a rod*, is supposed to allude to the exertion of those extraordinary apostolic powers which were sometimes exercised, as in the death of Ananias and Sapphira.

1. It appears from many passages of St. Paul's epistles, that the lusts of the flesh (so much indulged among the heathen) were among those on which the purity of the gospel precepts had least effect. At Corinth in particular, the manners of the people were so corrupted, that *πορνεία* was a vulgar expression for leading a loose irregular life. Yet still incest was seldom heard of among the heathen. Cicero somewhere calls it, *scelus incredibile, et inauditum*.

5. epistle, you gather the congregation together; and in the name of Jesus Christ, solemnly expel this person from your communion; that he may see the heinousness of his sin, and after a sincere repentance, be restored to God's favour.—Your defending him in his wickedness is an immediate step towards being corrupted yourselves. You are under a necessity, therefore, on your own account, to remove this pernicious example. Consider your blessed Saviour's death; and preserve yourselves as free as possible from sin, which was the cause of it.
9. But though I have thus given you strict injunctions not to communicate with any person, whose life is notoriously stained with impurities; yet I must restrict what I say to your own society: for as to your heathen neighbours, many of whose lives are thus stained, it is impossible for you entirely to avoid an intercourse with them. We must leave them, therefore, to the judgment of God. But over our own brethren we may exercise more strictness.—I command you, therefore, once more to excommunicate this wicked person.
- CHAP. VI.
1. This leads me to add another injunction. I greatly disapprove your carrying disputes before heathen magistrates; and would have you always decide them

7. *Purge out therefore the old leaven.* St. Paul, in this passage, alludes to a custom prescribed by the Jewish law (see Deut. xvi. 4.) of cleansing their houses from leaven, before the celebration of the passover.

9. The word *εἰσαίτω* here, is thought by many not to refer to any past letter, but to the present one. St. Chrysostom particularly interprets it thus.

among

among themselves. You have heard what our blessed Saviour said with regard to his saints judging the world. If such honour be assigned them, are they not fit, think you, to determine the trifling things of this life? In these matters, I should suppose that even the meanest member of a Christian church might be a sufficient judge. How shameful, therefore, is it, that even the wisest among you is not able to decide a trifling controversy; but that Christians, who ought to give an example of mildness, forbearance, and gentleness to others, should not only quarrel among themselves, but even carry their disputes before heathen judicatories? You must surely see how contrary this is to real Christianity; and that if you fulfilled your profession, you ought rather to suffer an injury, than by such means to redress it.—But I fear there are other great wrongnesses of practice among you; and together with the impurities, of which I have just been speaking, there are excesses of another kind—covetousness, extortion, and dishonesty, which lead you into these unchristian contentions among yourselves, and equally exclude you from all hopes of inheriting the blessings of the gospel. Once, no doubt, many of you were

2. 3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8. 9.

10.

11.

2. See a note on Matt. xix. 28, in which I suppose this expression, with regard to judging the world, is figurative. This, however, hinders not, why St. Paul might not allude to it, as an inforcement of his argument. That the expression is figurative, seems plain; because otherwise the apostle's argument requires us to suppose that these Corinthian converts themselves, as well as the apostles, were to judge the world; *If the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?*

deeply immersed in all these vices : but you should consider, that you have been called to a state of holiness—and that you have been baptized and sanctified through the Holy Spirit.

12. Preserve yourselves, therefore, in that purity ; and particularly with regard to abstaining from the lusts of the flesh, use such means as are most conducive to this end. A temperate use of food is highly necessary ; which, you should always remember, is designed merely for the ends and purposes of this life. —The natural dignity of the human body also, which is created for the Lord, places the guilt of
14. impure affections in a strong light. The same God, who raised up Jesus from the dead, will raise up our
15. 16. 17. bodies also. —We should farther consider ourselves as the members of Christ. Shall we pollute the members of Christ with deeds of uncleanness? —
18. 19. We should even consider our bodies as the temples of the Holy Ghost. Let us not then, by polluting
20. them, pollute those temples. —Lastly, we should consider ourselves as redeemed, and bought with a price. Let us then, in body and spirit, glorify that God to whom we belong.

CHAP.
VII.

I shall proceed now to answer the several questions
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. you have proposed. —The first relates to marriage ;
which,

1. This chapter seems to relate to questions asked by some converts, who had been bred up with an idea of the lawfulness of fornication ; and who little understood the nature of the marriage contract. As it respects chiefly the circumstances of the Corinthian

which, in the present state of the church, I should not greatly encourage. To prevent, however, such impurities as are practised among the heathen, every one ought, at least, to be left at perfect liberty in this matter. I give you my own private opinion, in ad-6. 7. 8. 9. vising that restraint which I practise myself.—But 10. 11. with regard to a marriage once entered into, it is the plain command of our blessed Lord, that there shall be no separation, except for the cause of adultery. If any separation take place on slighter grounds, and either party marry again, such a marriage is adultery.

But in this new question which you have put to 12. 13. 14. me, and on which our Lord hath not given you his 15. 16. injunctions, I will give you mine. In a marriage between a Christian and a heathen, if the heathen party wish to continue the union, there ought to be no objection on the other side: for the religious sentiments of the Christian may draw over the heathen. Besides, such union affords the best hope of bringing up your children in the Christian faith. If, however, on this religious difference, a separation be chosen by

rinthian church, and particularly marriage contracts between Christians and heathen, I have contented myself with preserving the apostle's general argument.—His restriction of marriage was certainly meant only as a temporary caution; (see ver. 26.) for St. Paul is otherwise an advocate for marriage; and considers *forbidding to marry*, as one of the signs of heresy.

15. But though a separation may take place, I presume the apostle does not authorise a *second marriage*. The reason of the separation seems to be, lest the man or woman, being carried among their heathen relations, should be seduced from their religion.

the heathen party, let it take place. Religion is certainly a more sacred tie than marriage. Only let every thing of this kind be accompanied with mildness and tenderness.

17.18.19. And here let me remind you of what I have ear-
 20.21.22. nestly taught in all places where I have planted the
 23. 24. gospel; that the Christian religion is intended to make no change in the civil rights or outward circumstances of men.—The Jew and the heathen are equally called: the circumcision of one and the uncircumcision of the other make no difference.—The master and the slave are equally called: the bondage of the one and freedom of the other make no difference. If, however, the slave can have his liberty, let him accept it. But even a state of bondage may be endured on Christian principles: the master should esteem himself Christ's bondman, and the slave should consider himself as Christ's freedman. Whatever your outward circumstances of life may be, you are all equally bought with a price, and all equally belong to Christ.

25.26.27. You will consider, therefore, (to return to my
 28. subject,) that I only mean to discourage marriage
 among

23. *Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men.* The apostle's argument is, *Ye are bought with a still higher price than your earthly master paid for you; consider yourselves, therefore, rather as the servants of your heavenly, than of your earthly master.*

25. Most interpreters make this paragraph the beginning of a new subject. To me it appears with most force as depending on what the apostle had said in the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses of this chapter, with a view to sum up the whole argument, from the consideration

among you, on account of the inexpediency of it, during the present distressed state of the church; and that what I have said on that subject, is merely from myself, without any express command from the Lord. Let no man conceive me to suppose any sinfulness in the married state: all I say is, that the times forebode much trouble and affliction; and on that account, I speak merely to your discretion, not to your consciences. The ties, the relations, the joys, the sorrows, the riches, the poverty, the whole fashion of this world, will soon be over. But during this persecuted state of the church, a married life must occasion additional distraction; and will make it a much greater difficulty, both to the man and the woman, to attend the affairs of religion. If, however, this abstinence engage any of you in greater difficulties and temptations than it removes, my argument at once ceases.

Under these rules, also, let the parents and guardians of young women act, who cannot so well, in these cases, act for themselves. If they who are thus entrusted, see a proper reason for giving their daughters

consideration of the instability of human things. The eight verses therefore, from the 17th to the 25th, are a digression, addressed to a prevailing opinion among the Jews, that the Christian religion dissolved all civil ties, as well as heathen marriages.

29. Some think the passage, contained in the three or four following verses, was written in the spirit of prophecy. The persecution of Nero, indeed, soon succeeded; but I rather suppose the apostle's meaning comprehends the general persecuted state of the church, of which our Saviour had given his disciples sufficient warning.

ters

ters or wards in marriage, let them do it: there is certainly no sin in the case. If no such reason appear, they will do better, at this time, not to encourage these connections.

39. 40. Lastly, with regard to second marriages, the rule still holds. There is certainly no sin in a second marriage, if the first be dissolved by death. But as in the former case, and for the same reasons, I give my advice against it.—It is true, I speak only my own private judgment in this case; but I think I may be considered as acting under a superior direction to that of a common adviser.

CHAP.
VIII.

- I come now to your next question, *Whether it be lawful for a Christian to eat meats offered to an idol, in an idol-temple?*—With regard to this matter, I doubt not but you are all ready to profess your religious knowledge; not perhaps enough considering, that charity is the soul of religion—that con-

39. The expression *only in the Lord* is explained by almost all commentators, as a prohibition to marry a heathen. I cannot say it conveys more to me than that in marriage, as in every thing else, we should act under a sense of religion.

40. In the expression ΔΟΚΩ ΙΚΕΙΝ, the word ΔΟΚΩ, Dr. Whitby observes, is often an expletive; so that the expression means, *I have the spirit of God.*

1. Partaking of the sacrifices of a heathen temple was a practice so convenient to the poor, and so agreeable from its festivity, to the rich, that it was not easily relinquished. Many of the heathen converts conceived, that as they had no belief in idols, they might partake innocently of these sacrifices.—I add the expression, *in an idol-temple*, because that certainly was the apostle's meaning, as appears from the tenth verse. With regard to the mere meats themselves, he speaks afterwards. See ch. x. 25.

fidence

fidence proceeds from ignorance—and that true 3.
 religion hath no foundation but the love of God 4. 5. 6.
 and his commandments.—I doubt not, however,
 but you are all ready to profess, that you know
 an idol is nothing—that, notwithstanding the diver-
 sity of gods which are worshipped around you, you
 believe only in one God, who made the world, and
 in one redeemer, Jesus Christ.—At the same time, 7.
 I know well this faith is not universal among you.
 There are some, who, to this very day, have their
 heathen prejudices so far about them, as to partake
 of meats offered to idols in a religious sense; thus
 mixing Christianity and idolatry together.

It is very true, that eating *food of any kind* is an 8.
 indifferent matter in the sight of God. But it is 9.
 by no means an indifferent matter to *mislead a weak*
brother. Even suppose it were *allowable* for a *well-* 10.
informed Christian to eat meat sacrificed in an idol-
 temple; is there no offence, think you, in encourag-
 ing by your practice the doubts of others, who have
 less knowledge than you have? Is there no offence 11.
 in contradicting the whole scheme of your redemp-
 tion, by leading your brother into sin, from which
 Christ died to redeem him? While you thus mislead 12.
 your brethren, you sin against Christ.—Let it then 13.
 be your fixed resolution, that, as eating meat in an
 idol-temple may draw your brother into sin, you
 will never again allow yourself in that practice.

3. *Εγνωσται* is here used (as St. Paul often uses Greek words) in
 a Hebrew signification. It does not signify, *is known of him*: but,
is made to know him.

What I have said above, against eating meat in an
 1. 2. 3. idol-temple, proceeds chiefly upon the inexpediency
 of it. I might strengthen what I have said by my
 own practice in similar matters. You acknowledge
 me, for instance, to be an apostle; and if I am not
 4. such to others, at least I am to you. I have a right,
 5. 6. therefore, to my maintenance among you. I have a
 right, also, to the maintenance of my family, if I
 chose to have one, as well as Peter, and other apos-
 7. 8. tles. And this I claim on the principles of *nature*—
 9. 10. 11. the precepts of the *law*—and the commands of the
 12. 13. 14. *gospel*.—But, you see, I waive this right; nor
 15. would I, on any account, accept a gratuity from you.
 It is the only little matter of glorying I have, that I

1. The apostle is thought by some to speak, in this chapter, to another question; and at the tenth chapter to resume the argument about idol-meats. I own I list with those interpreters, who consider this chapter as a part of the same argument; and, indeed, St. Paul, at the 23d verse of the tenth chapter, seems to draw it to this conclusion: *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit; but the profit of many that they may be saved.* That the argument may appear with more force, I have drawn the heads of it together by abridging, rather than dilating it.

2. He was an apostle particularly to them, because he established the church of Corinth. They were, in fact, as he says, the *seed of his apostleship*.

5. Some commentators conceive the ἀδελφὴ γυναῖκα of the original to be some attendant female. In those days, though there were inns, there was no accommodation; so that if travellers did not carry people about with them to dress their victuals, they must suffer inconveniences. But the sense I have given, seems the most probable, because of the particular mention of Peter, whom we know to have been a married man. See Mat. viii. 14. and Luke iv. 38.

10. *He that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope.* This passage seems corrupt. In the Alexandrian and other copies, it is read, ο ἀλων ἐν ἰσχυρῇ τῇ μετῇ: *he that thresheth, doth it in hope of partaking.*

preach

preach the gospel to you without expence. To preach 16.17.18.
 the gospel to you, I am obliged : but that I give up
 my own advantages and rights, for your sake, is
 my boast.—For the same reason that I wave this 19.
 right, I wave a number of others, for the benefit
 of those to whom I preach. As far as I can with 20. 21.
 a safe conscience, I become a Jew to the Jews, and
 a Gentile to the Gentiles. I put on infirmities with 22.
 the weak ; and become all things to all men, that I 23.
 may gain the more ; submitting thus to many incon-
 veniences, for the sake of the gospel.—Consider, 24.25.26.
 again, what self-denials even the candidates in your 27.
 public games undergo. What ease, what comfort
 do they give up, for the sake of worldly glory ? —
 Let us then so far follow their example ; suffering
 many inconveniences, that we may procure happiness
 to others, and secure it to ourselves.

CHAP.

X.

Let me place this matter before you in another
 light ; and urge you with the example of the ancient 1. 2.
 Israelites. They were governed by a divine dispen-
 sation—they were led by a pillar of fire—they passed
 through the red sea—they eat bread from heaven— 3. 4.
 and

25. This is much the same doctrine which our Saviour inculcates in the parable of the unjust steward (Luke xvi. 8.). *The children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light.*

2. The text says, *They were baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea.* This is an expression obscurely figurative. I know not what sense to affix to it, but that we accept Christ as our lawgiver, through the miracles he wrought ; as the Jews accepted Moses.

4. The text says, *They drank of that rock that followed them ; and that rock was Christ*—that is, it was an emblem of Christ, which was

5. and drank water, by a miracle, from a rock. And yet, favoured as they were, they incurred God's displeasure; as you certainly will also, though favoured like them, if you follow their bad example, and give yourselves up to improper indulgences. By frequenting idol-temples, however innocent you may think it, and eating things offered to idols, you may fall by degrees into those vile practices, which occasioned the destruction of the Israelites, and will also occasion yours.—Be not, then, too secure, from being in covenant with God. Humbly endeavour to avoid temptations, instead of running into them by these idolatrous practices; and God's grace will help you to overcome the seductions of wicked men, and all other temptations which unavoidably surround you.
15. Let me place this matter before you in a still stronger light; hoping that your own reason will see the force of what I say.—In the institution of the

was carried along with them. The metonymy of a *rock* for the *water of the rock*, is easy. And the word ἀκολουθῶντες as easily admits the sense of *being carried with them*. Ælian exactly uses it in this sense, where he says, that Xerxes carried water with him, drawn from the river Choaspes, which was the only water the kings of Persia drank, (ὕδωρ ἠκολουθεῖν ἔφερον.) Hist. l. xii. c. 40. —Others are of opinion, that the stream which Moses struck from the rock, formed itself into a rivulet, and accompanied the Israelites in their passage through the desert. For the sake of this advantage, they would naturally keep in that track or road through which it led them. See Lightfoot's Heb. and Talm. Exer. v. ii. p. 766.

11. *On whom the ends of the world are come*—that is, to whom God's last dispensation, the Christian religion, has been revealed. The Jews reckoned three ages—the first before Moses—the second after him—and the third after the Messiah.

Holy Sacrament, what is held out, think you, among Christians, by their partaking of the *same bread* and the *same cup*? Certainly that communion which we all profess to hold, both among ourselves and with Christ.—Thus, too, in the Jewish church, all who eat at the same altar, profess themselves to be of the same communion.—Just so, likewise, they who partake of sacrifices in an idol-temple, give an open declaration that they hold communion with idolaters. And would you throw such an imputation as this on yourselves, and on the holy religion you profess?—Provoke not God, then, with these practices; nor enter into contest with the Almighty.—It is no excuse, to say that you pay no respect to the idol, nor eat the offerings made to it through a religious motive. It is a great evil, if you injure religion by giving offence to others. Every man owes a debt to those around him: nor is it enough to consult his own good meanings: he should take care, also, that those meanings be not misinterpreted by others.

Thus I have given you my opinion at large, with regard to *eating meats offered to idols in an idol-temple*; which I totally disapprove.—With regard, however, to the *meats themselves*, I am no way scrupulous. They are often sold in the markets; and I have no objection to your purchasing *them*, or *any* meats there,

25. As a great part of the sacrifices were given away, it was customary for the poorer people to carry their share to the market.

26. without asking a question : for even idol-meats, when thus reduced to common use, rank again among the
27. other good creatures of God.—Or if any of you eat with a heathen neighbour, refuse nothing that
- 28.29.30. is set before you, on any religious scruple. But if any scrupulous person inform you, that this or that kind of meat had been offered to an idol, by no means eat ; lest you lead him by your example to do what is contrary to his conscience. In other respects, if you eat with thanksgiving, there is no objection.
31. —Let it be your first great rule, to devote yourselves, and the commonest actions of your lives, to the glory of God : and let it come in as a second rule
32. to give no offence to man. This hath ever been
33. my study : and as far as I imitate Christ, do you imitate me.
- CHAP. XI.
1.

2. 3. I come now to your next question ; *Whether women assisting in the prayers and hymns of the church, should keep their veils on?*—But before I discuss

27. It was common also among the richer, to carry their shares home for family uses.

28. The expression, *for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*, (taken from Pl. xxiv. 1.) is given as a reason both for eating and for not eating. It is a reason for eating, where your conscience is not concerned, because all food in reality belongeth not to the idol, but to the Lord, from whom we receive it. And indeed this is the reason for which it is sanctified by thanksgiving, because then we acknowledge not the idol, but the Lord for the giver. Again, it is a reason for not eating, because, where your conscience is concerned, the creation produces food sufficient, without using any prohibited species.—Many, however, think the repetition of these words disturbs the sense so much, that they are glad to avail themselves of the Alexandrian copy, and other copies, in which they are not repeated.

this

this point, let me tell you, it gives me great pleasure to commend your observance of those *other rules of decency* in your public assemblies, which I have already given you.

With regard then to your question, I would have that appearance of regularity and subordination observed, which God hath appointed in every thing. A man's appearing in a public assembly uncovered, 4. 5. 6. 7. and a woman's appearing veiled, are considered as the usual signs of superiority and subjection. As 8. 9. such, therefore, I enjoin them; and would have that natural and modest subordination take place, which was first pointed out at the creation of man.— I may add, also, that there will ever be people at 10. hand, among the enemies of religion, as spies upon you,

7. The veil was worn in token of subjection. See Gen. xxiv. 65. So late in the history of mankind, as in the time of the Romans, the veil was considered in the same light. Valerius Maximus (l. vi. c. 3.) speaks of the great harshness of Sulpicius in repudiating his wife, because she appeared in public without a veil. The word *nupta* properly signifies *one covered with a veil*.

10. *For this cause*, says the text, *ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels*. This is confessedly a very difficult expression; and many strange interpretations have been given of it. The expression, *power on her head*, is not very difficult. Almost all interpreters agree in supposing it to signify, *having her head veiled to denote her inferiority*.—The difficulty lies in the reason given for having her head veiled—*because of the angels*.—For one of the most *ingenious* explanations of this matter, we are indebted to Dr. Jeremy Taylor, who supposes (Liberty of Proph. sect. iii.) that *αγγελοι* hath been the mistake of some transcriber for *αγιδας*; and then the sense is, that women ought to wear veils in churches, *because of the assemblies of men there present*.—But the interpretation I have given, which is authorized by some of the most learned commentators, is, I think, the best. For this interpretation we give the following reasons,

you, to observe and mark any impropriety or indecency in your behaviour. — What I say, however, on this subject, must not be understood as countenancing any undue authority in the man, or any slavish subjection in the woman: for men and women were created for each other, and for their mutual comfort and assistance.

11. 12. But besides its betokening a proper subordination, there is a *natural decency* in a woman's appearing veiled in a public assembly. Even the long hair which nature hath given her, evidently shews the intention of nature: and you would all see an impropriety, if the sexes should change the usual distinction; if the man should wear his hair long, while the woman should wear her's short. — After

— In the first place, it is certain, that unbelievers did come in as spies in Christian assemblies. See 1 Cor. xiv. 23, 24, 25. And particularly Galat. ii. 4. — In the second place, the word *αγγελος*, which literally signifies a *messenger*, as well as an *angel*, is sometimes also used to denote a *spy*. Thus in James ii. 25, *υποδιε-αμνη της αγγελου* she received the *messengers*; which *messengers* we know were *spies*, and were the *very same persons* whom St. Paul (Heb. xi. 31.) calls by their proper name, *κατασκοποι*, *spies*. — In the septuagint also, the word *αγγελος* is used in this sense. — An ingenious friend, finding that the word *angel* means often a *minister in the Jewish synagogue*, (see Lightfoot on the word *synagogue*,) explains the text thus, *I order women to be veiled, lest they give offence to the ministers of the synagogue*. — It is happy, however, that this very difficult text is of no great consequence to us. These injunctions of St. Paul with regard to women must be considered as *local* only; alluding to customs then prevailing at Corinth. All the instruction that *we* are to draw from them is, that every thing in our religious assemblies should be conducted with regularity, order, and subordination.

15. Some commentators think the apostle's interdiction of dishevelled hair, and his injunction to wear veils, was to obviate all similitude between Christian women and heathen priestesses.

all I have said, if any are still unconvinced, I have only to add, that the practice I have here prescribed to you, is the practice of all the Christian churches I am acquainted with.

I come now to a point in which there is great
 cause for finding fault—I mean the irregularity that
 attends your assemblies at the celebration of the
 Lord's supper.—In the first place, I hear there
 are divisions among you, on this subject, and party-
 distinctions; which I rather believe. Such, indeed,
 is the constitution of this world, that there always
 must be a difference of opinion among men, which
 will act as a kind of test of their wisdom and pru-
 dence.—But here is an evident fault, not merely
 in matters of opinion, but in practice. Indeed, my
 brethren, your general manner of assembling is very
 far from the simple institution of our Lord. You
 make a *common contribution* of food in your love-feasts,
 it is true: but how is it disposed of? The richer
 form into parties; and taking their own provisions,
 eat and drink to excess: while the poorer, instead
 of finding comfort from the abundance of their richer
 neighbours, are left to starve. This is turning the
 church of God into an eating-house; and the sacra-

21. I take it for granted, that the apostle alludes here to what were called love-feasts; as we read of no other occasion on which they contributed to a common meal; though Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, he alludes to an ante-supper, which the Jewish converts used in imitation of the passover. Heb. and Tal. Exer. p. 776.

ment into a riotous meal ; and calls for a very severe reprehension.

23. 24. In opposition to this, consider the simple institution of the Lord's supper, as enjoined by our Lord himself, and as you have been taught by me. Sitting with his disciples at the paschal table, that night in which he was betrayed, the holy Jesus took bread, and blessing it, brake, and gave it among them, bidding them eat it in remembrance of his body, that
25. was broken for them. In the same manner, he distributed the cup in remembrance of his blood, that
26. was shed ; and instituted this plain, easy rite, to be a *visible record*, as it were, through all ages, of his meritorious death.
27. It is a great profanation, therefore, of this sacred rite, to celebrate it in the riotous assemblies I have
28. been describing. Examine, then, the purposes for which it was instituted ; and judge from thence of the temper and behaviour with which you ought
29. 30. to receive it. For you may be assured, that this
unworthy

26. *Ye shew forth the Lord's death.* This seems to allude to the *Haggadah*, or *shewing forth*, in the passover. Some youth was appointed to ask the reason of that rite ? Then some grave person present was appointed to *shew it forth*.

28. An excellent rule, something like this, is given Ecclus. xviii. 23. *Before thou prayest, prepare thyself.*

29. *Not discerning the Lord's body.* Not considering the end of the institution : perhaps considering it under the old idea of the Jewish passover.

30. The apostle mentions the infliction of diseases and death. These temporal punishments seem to have been inflicted, though uncommonly, in the early church ; but we must always consider
them

unworthy manner of receiving it will provoke God's indignation against you. Let those, therefore, who have not yet felt the hand of God, prevent it, by looking into their own behaviour: and let those who now lie under his judgments, consider them as the providential means of their restoration to his favour. Let every circumstance of decency and order attend this solemn institution: but for the future, let no common meal accompany it.—Other things, with regard to this point, I will give orders about when I visit you.

CHAP.
XII.

Your next question, with regard to *spiritual endowments*, leads me into a longer inquiry. I shall endeavour to answer it fully.—In the first place,

them as inflicted by God. The apostles were only God's instruments—Some indeed suppose the apostle is describing here only the common effects of intemperance.

31. I explain διακρίνειν by the expression, *looking into their own behaviour*. Διακρίνειν does not signify *to judge*, but *to examine*.

32. *Chastened* is a good translation of παιδεύομεθα, which signifies properly, *to be corrected as children*.

34. This verse appears to be the prohibition not only of the *irregularity* of love-feasts, but of *love-feasts themselves*. They certainly began early to be very disorderly assemblies, and were therefore early abolished. Traces of them may be found later in the church: but this does not disprove the apostle's prohibition of them at Corinth, where they had arisen to so great a height of disorder.

1. These were the several powers which it pleased God to commit to the early Christians for the propagation of the gospel. In the practice of a good life, we are every where assured that the Holy Spirit of God will assist our pious endeavours. But the apostle here speaks of the special gifts which were entrusted to the first Christians, and which ceased after the first age. The exact knowledge, therefore, of this question, is of less concern to us.

- that you may not be exalted with these spiritual endowments, remember how lately you were all sunk
3. in the impurities of idolatry.—Let me next remind you, that Christ is the foundation of all these spiritual gifts; and that every pretension to them is false, but
4. 5. 6. 7. what depends on the truth of the gospel. Be assured also, that whatever gifts or endowments of any kind you are possessed of, notwithstanding their variety,—
8. supernatural knowledge,—eminent degrees of faith
9. 10. 11. —a power of working miracles—the gift of prophecy—the ability of detecting falsehood—speaking in different languages—all proceed from the same Spirit, who distributes them severally to each, as He pleases. The church of Christ, therefore, like the
12. human body, is made up of various members. Be
13. they Jews or Gentiles, bound or free, yet, after they are baptized into the Christian profession, they become all united by the same Spirit, as the natural
14. 15. 16. body is by the same soul. So that when Christians possessing various gifts, have any animosity in point of pre-eminence, it is as if the hand or the foot, or any other member, should take offence at the rest.
17. 18. All are necessary, and contribute to the general good
19. of the whole. Without any one of them, the body
20. would be imperfect; while their union makes it
21. complete. No one part can say of any other, that it
22. 23. 24. is unnecessary. Even the weakest and least distin-
25. 26. guished parts, as well as the nobler, have their use. So that the body and its members being all at union, no part can suffer, without injury to the rest; nor
- can

can any part enjoy ease, unless the rest partake of it.

Under this comparison, I would have you consider the church of Christ, consisting of apostles, prophets, teachers, and all its other members, composing one uniform and connected whole. Without this subordination, no society can exist; and though all cannot attain the highest endowments, yet let all endeavour to deserve them. By emulating each other, as you do, you certainly shew you have not yet attained, what is beyond them all, a right idea of Christian charity. Though a person were possessed of every spiritual attainment—though he could speak the language of angels—though he were endowed with the gift of prophecy—though he understood the whole mystery of the redemption of man—and was actuated by a faith that could work the greatest miracles—though his *actions* were as splendid as his *endowments*—though he gave his whole possessions to the poor; and submitted his body even to martyrdom itself—yet still, if these endowments and these actions can be supposed to exist without Christian charity, they would be of no avail.—He, whose heart is warmed by this principle, is gentle and kind to all. He is free from envy, pride, and vanity. No improper behaviour is seen in him. He never seeks his own private advantage, when it interferes with the good of others. He is

CHAP.
XIII.

1. 2.

3.

4.

5.

27. Σωμα Χριστοῦ, καὶ μέλη ἐκ μεμῆς : Ye are, in one sense, the body and members of Christ.

- patient of injury, and the last to put an unfavourable construction on the meanings of others. Nothing
6. that hurts another gives pleasure to him. Nothing, but what, in some respect, has a religious tendency,
7. gives him real joy. His life is a constant course of opposition to his bad inclinations. He bears with the humours of those about him, seeking to hide, rather than expose them. He allows not himself to believe the slanders which he hears—and preserves his good opinion of others, as long as he possibly
8. 9. 10. can.—Consider, also, that as this spirit of charity *excels* all apostolic gifts, it *outlasts* them also. Prophecies shall be fulfilled—languages shall become unnecessary—and spiritual knowledge (here so imperfect) shall vanish in its future completion: but
11. charity shall continue with us to all eternity. In the present life, as we advance in years, and become more informed, our views are continually changing.
12. 13. In the same way, when we compare this world with the next, we may be said here to see only through faith and hope. But hereafter, when we shall be removed to perfect vision, the objects of faith and hope being obtained, Christian charity, converted into heavenly love, shall be the great source of all our future enjoyments.

CHAP.

XV.

1. 2.

As far then as you act under the influence of this great principle, you may desire spiritual gifts: but I should wish you chiefly to expound and instruct. For he who speaketh in an unknown tongue, may speak indeed to God; but speaketh in vain to his

hearers: while he who expounds scripture, edifies, 3.
 exhorts, and comforts all who hear him, and spreads 4.
 knowledge abroad in the church. For myself, I 5.
 rejoice in every gift you possess; particularly in the
 power given you of speaking languages. At the
 same time, I must say, that unless he who speaketh in
 an unknown language, interpret also, the expounder
 is certainly the more useful speaker. If I neither 6.
 make the revelation nor the doctrine intelligible,
 what end does my speaking answer? If the trumpet 7. 8.
 give no distinction of sound, how shall the soldier
 be directed? Just so, if your discourse is no address 9.
 to the understanding, what is its effect? God hath 10.
 given the blessing of languages to mankind to com-
 municate their sentiments: without this use, language 11.
 is nothing. Let me then repeat what I said, that as 12. 13.
 you are zealous of your spiritual gifts, I would have
 you make them answer the great purpose for which
 they were intended—the edification of the church.
 Let none of you, therefore, speak in an unknown
 tongue; unless what he says is interpreted either by
 himself or others.

The same rule holds equally in public prayer as 14.
 in preaching. If I pray in an unknown tongue,

6. The apostle uses four words, *revelation*, *knowledge*, *prophecy*, and *doctrine*. We may not, perhaps, be able with sufficient accuracy to distinguish the precise meaning of each: it is enough, however, for our purpose at present, that the apostle's general meaning is, that in whatever way we endeavour to instruct, it is to no purpose, unless we make our meaning intelligible.

- my own devotion may be pure ; but I cannot lead
 15. the devotion of others. All prayers, therefore, and
 spiritual hymns, should not only be devout, but ad-
 16. 17. dressed to the understanding also. Otherwise, though
 your prayers in themselves may be excellent, it is
 impossible the congregation can unite in them. —
 18. 19. For myself, though the gift of tongues is imparted
 to me in full measure, my chief employment hath
 20. been expounding. — Be not then carried away, like
 children, by novelties ; but like men, use your un-
 derstanding ; and consider the end for which the gift
 21. of tongues was imparted. You remember the early
 prediction of this great gift, *With other tongues and*
other lips will I speak unto this people ; and yet they
 22. *will not hear.* To speak in an unknown tongue,
 therefore, you see, may be a miracle to *convert un-*
believers : but to those who *believe*, expounding is
 23. the proper application. Unknown languages, used
 incautiously, will discredit religion, instead of aiding
 it. What, think you, would an unbeliever suppose,
 who should enter your assemblies, and find a person
 talking to the congregation in a language which
 none of them understood ? It would make him
 24. suppose you were rather mad than inspired. But if
 he should hear any of your teachers *expounding*, a
 25. different effect might then be expected. He might
 see his error ; his conscience might take alarm ; and
 falling down on his knees, he might worship God

among you.—In conclusion, my brethren, when
 you come together, and every man hath his peculiar
 gift, let each be exercised with decency and order,
 and with a view merely to the instruction of your
 congregation.

The following rules may direct you.—Let not
 above two, or three at most, speak before one assem-
 bly, in an unknown tongue, and that in order; and
 let what is said always be interpreted: without an
 interpretation, let no unknown tongue be used.—

Let the teacher and expounder observe the same
 rule. Two or three are as many as I would have
 speak at one meeting. Let others sit by, and only
 approve or disapprove the passages expounded.—

Though another should be more informed on a sub-
 ject than he who is speaking, yet let him not speak
 till the first hath finished his discourse. Decency and
 order require this rule. The inspiration of a Chris-
 tian teacher, unlike the wild, ungoverned fury of
 a heathen priest, is subject to restraint, as coming

26. The texture of this verse seems to imply, that when they
 all came together, each with his particular gift, they were not so
 much concerned about edifying the church, as they were eager
 and contentious to display their several talents.

27. Why *any one* should be allowed to speak in an *unknown
 tongue* among believers of the same country, is difficult to con-
 ceive. It might, perhaps, be to examine his gifts; or as a proof,
 perhaps, to the congregation, that he possessed them. Or there
 might be persons of different countries present. Against any in-
 convenience, however, arising from the exercise of this gift, the
 apostle sufficiently guards.

30. Our translation of this verse (which is literal) *seems to im-
 ply* a contrary sense: but the context, I think, plainly shews this
 to be the true sense.

from

- from that God, who is the author of peace and order. I must add, also, that this is the constant
 34. 35. practice of all Christian churches.—I would not have women ask questions, and put their difficulties in public. It is unbecoming. Let them ask their
 36. husbands at home. Let these instructions be carefully observed; and let the Corinthian church remember, that it was not among the first converted; and ought not, therefore, to consider itself as a model
 37. to others. But let all your teachers conform to the advice I have given them, as the advice of an apostle
 38. of Christ. The obstinate must take their course.
 39. You see, then, my admonitions have two great points in view. The first is, that the gift of tongues may be used discreetly; and the stress laid on *expounding*, which tends more to edify the church.—
 40. The second, that all your public services may be performed with decency and order†.

I come

34. I am rather inclined to think, that in this instruction about women, no *public teaching* was *supposed*: but that it was meant to forbid women to ask questions, and raise difficulties and scruples at church, which would tend to disturb the congregation. Inspired women, no doubt, had often taught in churches, and might teach. Anna the prophetess was an instance. Philip's four daughters (Acts xxi. 9.) were other instances. And St. Paul himself (1 Cor. xi. 5.) seems to allow it; notwithstanding all that is said to reconcile that text with this. I cannot therefore suppose, that St. Paul here absolutely forbids women to speak in the church. But their asking questions continually might have been a very disorderly thing, and have come to such a height, that the apostle might think fit to repress it. See a note on 1 Tim. ii. 11.

† Chap. xiv. Though the gift of tongues hath ceased amongst us, this chapter is an admirable piece of instruction to the clergy of

I come now to that great article of your faith, and ground-work of your hopes—the resurrection of the dead.—It hath been the constant subject of my preaching to you, that Jesus Christ, according to the whole tenor of prophecy, died for our sins; was buried; and rose again.—I have repeated to you, also, the evidence on which this last great fact is founded—he was seen, after his resurrection, by Peter, James, and the other apostles, at different times—and at one time, by above five hundred people together, most of whom are, at this day, living witnesses of this wonderful event.—To this abundant evidence, I might add my own testimony. Though inferior to the rest of the apostles, because I was a persecutor of the church of God, and like one born out of due time; yet was I at length favoured with a sight of my Saviour: and by the grace of God, however unworthy, I am what I am. Nor was his grace bestowed on me in vain. Through

of any country—especially to the young clergy; who are often not attentive enough to accommodate themselves to their hearers. What matters it, thought they speak neither in Greek nor in Latin, if they treat subjects, or use words and phrases which the people do not understand?—And if they do this to shew their parts and learning, they fall *directly* into the fault which the apostle here reproves—that of ostentatiously displaying their gifts. If they would wish to preach for the sake of edifying, they cannot possibly use words of too easy a signification: for they who have been most conversant with low people, know best the short extent of their ideas.

4. It appears that many of the Corinthian converts disbelieved the resurrection of the dead, (see ver. 12.) and others probably held very doubtful opinions about it from hearing it constantly ridiculed by the heathen philosophers, some of whom used to call it in derision, *the hope of worms*.

its

its blessed influence, my labours in the gospel have
 11. been unceasing. I mean not, however, to lessen the labours of other apostles. We all unite in one work. We preach, and you believe, that one great doctrine, the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

12. But now, if *Christ's resurrection* be thus confirmed, whence is it that any of you can doubt his *own*?

13. Your resurrection is inseparably connected with

14. *Christ's*. If Christ did not rise, *your faith* is vain,

15. 16. and likewise *our preaching*. Instead of apostles, we are false witnesses, testifying the resurrection of Christ, which is void of all truth, unless *his* resurrection ensure *ours*. If Christ did *not* rise, our faith is groundless; we are yet in our sins; and all the hopes of
 17. those who sleep in Christ are perished. Hard, indeed, would then be the Christian's lot, who gives
 18. up every thing here, and has nothing to expect
 19. hereafter.

20. Be not, however, misled by these false opinions. Christ is certainly risen; and ensures the resurrection

21. 22. of all his followers. As surely as Adam brought death into the world, so surely hath Christ restored

23. us to life: and in a natural order, rising first him-

24. 25. 26. self, he enables us to follow him.—Then shall be accomplished the great end of the Messiah's kingdom, when all his enemies shall be subdued; the
 27. last of which is death. After this great subjection

20. *And became the first-fruits of them that sleep.* This is a beautiful allusion to the first-fruits under the law, which sanctified the harvest.

of every thing to Christ, except the Creator himself, hath taken place; then the Messiah, depositing his mediatorial office, shall be united fully with God. 28.

But, at present, we have to do only with the resurrection of the dead. If we believe not this article, how absurd is it to embrace a religion, which enjoins us to be dead to every thing in this world. Equally so are the dangers and death, of which we daily run the risk. Instead of this, it were better 29. 30. 31. 32.

28. This is one of those passages on which the Arian builds, and, no doubt, it is a great difficulty. I think, however, it will bear, without any forced interpretation, the sense here given. I know not what more consistent sense can be put on that awfully obscure expression, *that God may be all in all*. Our Saviour is represented in scripture, as sitting at the right hand of God, and making intercession for us. Till the conclusion of this world, therefore, his *mediatorial office* continues. Time is nothing with him, with whom a thousand years are but as one day. When this great event, the conclusion of all things, shall take place, then God and Christ become one. It is possible that St. Paul may allude to this great event, when he says, (Heb. ii. 8.) *We see not yet all things put under him*.—But I give this solution, which is yet authorized by good commentators, with great diffidence and humility. It is a subject we must not pretend to comprehend.

29. It appears, that the apostle having given a short sketch of the completion of the Messiah's kingdom, to which the resurrection of the dead led him, returns again to that point.—Being *baptized for the dead* may signify, as some suppose, suffering martyrdom: as our Saviour, a little before his death, says, *I have a baptism to be baptized with*; and in other places to the same effect: but the sense here given seems to be the most consistent. The argument is, what shall they do who give up all the pleasures of this world, if there be no other?

32. *I protest by your rejoicing*, is only a mode of asseveration: I protest by your joy in the mercies of Christ.

32. *Fought with beasts at Ephesus*. Some suppose this is literally spoken. But others, who consider that St. Paul, as a Roman citizen, was exempted from this punishment, suppose he meant the violent contest he had with furious and wicked men.

at once to adopt the Epicurean maxim, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*—Take care, however, not to be misled by these corrupt notions, which can, indeed, only mislead those (I hope there are none such among you) who have no knowledge of God.

35. But perhaps some of your philosophical teachers may urge the improbability of a resurrection, from
 36. their not being able to comprehend it.—Can they comprehend the growth of seed? Does it not die,
 37. before it rises? Does not a different body rise (be
 38. it of whatever grain) from what is sown? And is it not credible, that the same Almighty power which raises corn from the ground, may be able also to
 39. raise a human body in the same manner? Why should it seem at all improbable, that God should be able from one body to produce another. With what numerous bodies, from men to insects, is the world replenished? How great the difference among them! Yet whence were all produced?
 40. 41. Take the heavenly bodies, also, into the account—the sun—the moon—the stars: what a variety of splendour do they exhibit! And yet of what were
 42. 43. they composed?—Under this idea, consider the resurrection of the dead. Is it more incomprehen-

36. Some object, that if the seed die, it never rises. But in fact, it does die: it is only the germen or bud that springs up; the body of the seed first feeds this bud, and then turns to corruption.

42. The apostle seems to confine what he says here, to the resurrection of the *pious* dead; which is all at present his discourse led him to. The wicked must look into other parts of scripture for the mode of their resurrection.

fible,

fible, that a glorious, immortal body should arise from a mass of corruption; than that all this vast variety of beautiful forms and splendid bodies should arise from nothing?

But you are led into this prejudice by the weak- 44.
nesses and imperfections of a natural body; not
considering that it is just as easy for an almighty
God to form a spiritual body, as to form a natural
one: and that this spiritual body may be inherited 45.
in the same way from Christ, as the natural body
is from Adam. The natural body precedes the 46.
spiritual body. And as our first body partakes of all 47. 48. 49.
the qualities of its earthly parentage; our second
body, depositing all its weakness and infirmities,
shall be arrayed in all the glorious qualities of its
heavenly one. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the 50.
kingdom of God. Corruption cannot inherit incor-
ruption. But when that great change, of which we 51.
have no conception, shall take place—when the awful 52.
voice of God shall call the dead from the grave;
when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, 53. 54.
and this mortal shall have put on immortality; then
shall the words of the prophet be fulfilled, *Death is
swallowed up in victory*. Then may all the holy dis-
ciples of Christ join in that triumphant song, founded
also in prophecy, *Where, Death, is now thy sting?* 55.
Where, Grave, is now thy victory?—Under the 56.

54. Isa. xxv. 8.

55. Hosea xiii. 14.

- law, indeed, enforcing sinless obedience, death was a fearful event; for we have all sinned, and made
 57. ourselves obnoxious to it. But thanks be to God in Christ, we are now under a law, which enables us to perform what it enjoins, and to avoid what it threatens. We have now the full means of victory over
 58. death and the grave.—Let us not, then, my brethren, be wanting to ourselves. Let us be steady in our faith, and in the conscientious discharge of a holy life; assuring ourselves, that, on these conditions, our hopes in the Lord shall never be in vain.

CHAP.
XVI.

1. 2. With regard to the last object of your inquiry, making *collections for the poor*, I shall just give you the same instruction which I have given the churches of Galatia; and that is, that each of you should lay by a portion, at the beginning of every week, for this service, as God hath prospered him, that
 3. when I come, all may be in readiness. At that time, I will appoint whomsoever you shall approve, to
 4. carry your liberality to Jerusalem; and will myself
 5. 6. 7. attend them, if it be necessary.—I propose soon to visit Macedonia: but I mean not to take you in my way; as I should rather wish to defer my journey to Corinth, till I can stay a longer time. Probably I may winter with you; and shall then accept your assistance in the farther prosecution of my designs.
 8. Till after pentecost, however, I shall continue at
 9. Ephesus, where I have a wide field before me, though
 I meet

I meet with much opposition.—If Timothy come 10. 11.
to you, treat him with affection and respect; and
assist him in his journey to me. I shall expect him 12.
soon, with the brethren who are with him.—I
could have wished that Apollos had visited you at
this time; but he seemed rather desirous to defer his
journey till a more convenient opportunity.

And now, my brethren, I beseech you to exert 13.
yourselves, and maintain that courage and constancy
in your profession which become Christians. Above 14.
all things, let there be no animosity nor dissension
among you in religious matters; but let that charity,
which I have so fully described, govern all your
counsels—your teaching—and general intercourse
with each other.

I need not desire you to pay respect to Stephanus. 15. 16.
He and his family were not only the first converts
in Achaia, but have been very useful to me in their
ministerial labours. Your sending him, and For- 17.
tunatus, and Achaicus, was particularly pleasing to
me: for they have given me a full account of the
state of your church; and have supplied what was
omitted in your letter. They have given me that 18.
comfort which they have often given you. Such
men you will ever hold in high esteem.

I transmit to you the general salutation of the 19. 20.
church; and likewise of private Christians. Be you

10. Probably because of his youth this caution was thought necessary; see 1 Tim. iv. 12.

as affectionate among each other, as this church is disposed to be affectionate to you.

21. I now with my own hand sign this epistle : and at the same time, my kind remembrance of you all—
22. wishing you always to consider, that he who does not live up to the religion he professes, deprives himself of all hope of happiness hereafter.
23. 24. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all ! Rest assured of my constant affection.

22. The expression *Maran-atha* is Syriac ; which language had entirely corrupted the Hebrew after the captivity. It signifies *The Lord cometh*, namely, *to execute vengeance*. After the Jews had lost the power of life and death, they used to execrate with this curse, such crimes as were capital ; as much as to say, *Though we cannot punish them, the Lord will*. St. Paul, therefore, speaking of the apostacy of professed Christians, as of a crime not punishable by human laws, says, alluding to this practice, *Though men cannot punish it, God will*.

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE
CORINTHIANS.

SECOND EPISTLE

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

CHAP.

I.

PAUL (an apostle of the Lord Jesus) and Timothy, to the church of Corinth, and to all Christians of Achaia; grace and peace from God and Christ!

With thankfulness I look up to God, the Father of our blessed Lord—the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, for that consolation in all my afflictions, which enables me to comfort those who are afflicted. For if our faith in Christ be the source of our worldly distresses, it is much more the source of our spiritual consolation. It is a happiness also to me to think that my *afflictions* and *joys* are yours also; and that they tend to impress you with holy sentiments on both these subjects. For I doubt not but as you are partakers of the distresses which often attend religion, you are also partakers of its con-

8. 9. 10. solations. The distresses, of which I particularly speak, are those I suffered in Asia, which were, indeed, such, that if I had trusted in any power less than in that God who raiseth the dead, I should have been overwhelmed by them. He can deliver in circumstances the most desperate. He hath often delivered me; and I fully trust, that I shall ever receive from him all proper deliverance. Your holy prayers, also, I doubt not, united with mine in obtaining my deliverance, as your praises will unite with mine in expressing my thankfulness.
11. For myself, whatever my distresses have been from ill-disposed men, I have always had the testimony of my own conscience, that with honesty and sincerity—through the grace of God, and not in worldly wisdom, I have preached the gospel of Christ. You, in particular, are my witnesses of this, as you have often acknowledged, and always, I doubt not, will acknowledge; considering my preaching as the means of your happiness, as I consider your conversion as my comfort. In this I shall always rejoice; and especially in the great day of the Lord Jesus.
12. In this kind disposition toward you, I had determined to visit you a second time, in my way from Macedonia; and to receive your assistance in my
13. 14. 15. 16.

8. An account of Paul's sufferings, to which he seems to allude, is contained in the xivth, xvth, and xixth chapters of Acts; some of which happened in Greece, and some in Asia. The apostle seems more particularly in the 9th verse to allude to his being left for dead after he had been stoned. See Acts xiv. 19.

11. By *gift* here the apostle means *deliverance*.

15. See 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 7,

journey

journey to Judea. At that time I fully intended it :
 but they who are ready to put a bad interpretation 17.
 on all my actions, I find, accuse me of levity, as
 if I did not intend what I assured you I did intend.
 God is my witness, I did mean it : and neither in 18.
 this, nor in any thing else, that I, or your other 19.
 pastors in Christ, have said to you, have you been 20.21.22.
 deceived. The promises of God are all founded in
 truth ; and we who act under Christ, act under the
 influence of the same Holy Spirit of truth. — The 23.
 true cause, I call God to witness, of my not coming,
 at this time, to Corinth, was tenderness and forbear-
 ance to those who have offended. I would not have 24.
 it be supposed, that I pretend to assert any dominion
 over your faith. Your faith is unalterably established. CHAP.
 All I wish for, in this matter, is to contribute to II.
 your spiritual joy. And for this reason, I chose to 1.
 defer my journey, till all occasion of offence should
 be removed. My comfort is in your joy : if I throw 2.
 you into distress, I make myself unhappy. — Instead 3.
 of coming to you, therefore, in person, I write this
 letter ; lest that happy meeting, which I expected,
 should be turned into an unhappy one : for I know
 that you are partakers of my joys and griefs.

18. When a man plainly *affirmed*, or *denied*, or (in the Hebrew language) had his *yea*, *yea*, and *nay*, *nay*, he was an honest man. But when he affirmed, and denied the same thing, or had *his yea* and *nay* at the same time, he was the contrary.

20. The connection of these verses with the preceding is difficult.

2. What tenderness of sentiment the holy apostle expresses here to his flock !

4. The severity of my last letter towards the incestuous person cost me much affliction and many tears. I was grieved for the distress I had occasioned: but I thought it necessary to give you this
5. instance of my love. In my grief, I doubt not but you all had your share; though I do not suppose
6. you were all involved in the occasion of it.—I now think, that as the offender hath shewn penitence, his
7. 8. punishment should be remitted. Forgive him, therefore; receive him again into your communion; and shew him, by not laying too severe a hand upon him, that you love *him*, though you detest his *crime*.
9. The end of my writing is fully attained, when I have restored this offender, and seen a proof of your obedience. My forgiveness in Christ shall certainly fol-
10. low yours; for I know that despair is among the
11. devil's chief means of seduction,
12. 13. And now, my brethren, be fully assured of my earnest care and concern for you. If you want a new proof of it, know, that when I went to Troas, with a view to preach the gospel, though I met there a very ready acceptance; yet, because I found not Titus, from whom I expected an account of my
14. Corinthian converts, I could not rest; but went in search of him into Macedonia. There I found him—and there, I thank God, I heard that happy account of the prosperity of your church, which makes me triumph in Christ.

5. There is great difficulty in this verse: but I have endeavoured, as well as I could, to connect it with the context,

14. See chap. vii. 6.

But still great is the difficulty of our ministry. To 15. 16.
 some we are the means of life : while we increase
 the guilt of others, who continue incorrigible under
 our reproof.—Yet a gracious God, I doubt not,
 will accept our services, with whatever success they
 may be attended : for we have this inward testimony,
 that we do not corrupt the gospel, but preach it 17.
 with sincerity, as in the sight of God.—It is not, CHAP.
 however, I trust, necessary for me to say any thing III.
 in my own defence ; or to procure, as may be re- 1.
 quired from others, letters of recommendation to 2. 3.
 you, or from you. Your conversion is our letter of
 recommendation, open to the perusal of all—dictated
 by Christ, though written by us—not with ink—nor
 like the law, on tables of stone ; but with the Spirit
 of God on your hearts. Such confidence have we 4.
 in our ministry before God and Christ ! Not that 5.
 we form this confidence, in any degree, on ourselves ;
 but trust entirely in God, who hath appointed us his
 ministers of the gospel ; from whence proceedeth 6.
 that life which the law could not give. If the dis- 7. 8.

15. 16. The sense of these two verses is not perfectly clear. I have transposed them by explaining the sixteenth first : which, I think, renders them somewhat clearer.

6. *Who hath made us*, says the text, *able ministers of the New Testament—not of the letter ; but of the Spirit*. This expression hath given great latitude to certain interpreters of scripture ; who from hence think themselves authorised in expounding what they please in an allegorical sense. Whereas, it is evident, the apostle does not speak of the *writings* of the New Testament, which did not then exist : but meant only to shew, that the New Testament (or Christian dispensation) was superior to the law.

penfation

- penfation and miniftry of the law were of a glorious nature, (which was fufficiently fhewn by that luftre on the face of Mofes, which dazzled the eyes of the people,) how much more glorious may we fuppose the difpenfation of the gofpel, which was intended
9. to complete it? If the law were glorious, which was defective, and could not fave; how much more glorious is the gofpel, which makes up all the deficiencies of the law? There can, indeed, be no comparifon between a difpenfation, which was always intended, in a due courfe of time, to expire, and
10. 11. one of continual duration. The minifters of the gofpel, therefore, fpeak plainly and freely its great
12. truths: while Mofes, covering his face with a veil, fignified by that type, that there remained ftill fome-
13. thing behind unfeen. And this veil is ftill upon
14. 15. the hearts of the greateft part of the Jewish nation, who yet fee not the glory concealed behind. Nor
16. can they fee it, till they embrace the Chriftian faith, which will fpiritualize their hearts, and at once fet
17. them free from all the ceremonies of the law, and the dominion of fin. In this holy religion, unveiled,
18. we fee reflected, as in a glafs, the image of our Lord; and conforming ourfelves to it, through the influence of his Holy Spirit, are carried daily to new degrees of perfection.

15. Mr. Locke fuppofes, St. Paul may poffibly allude here to a cuftom, ftill among the Jews in their fynagogues, of putting a veil over their faces when the law is read.

Under this sense, therefore, of the holiness of the Christian religion and its ministry, I persevere, through all opposition, in the discharge of my duty. Conscious to myself, that I use no deceit nor worldly arts of any kind, I address the consciences of men in all the honesty of truth before God. It is impossible, indeed, that any one should resist the force of this pure and rational belief; unless his understanding were first led away by the wickedness of the world. We preach not ourselves, my brethren, but Christ Jesus, our Lord. *We* are merely the ministers of the gospel, receiving all our knowledge from that God, who with the same power with which he commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath illumined our hearts with the rays of the gospel, and the bright image of its blessed Author.—Conscious, therefore, of our own imperfections, and, at the same time, of the power of God, under which we act, we are afflicted on every side, yet always comforted: we are perplexed, but never in despair: we are persecuted, but never forsaken: we faint, but always revive. The sufferings and death of our blessed Lord stand threatening on one side; his glorious resurrection exhorting on the other. For as we die for his sake, we are confident also of living through him; and of being, through our death, the ministering cause of your life, as well as of our own. Under all

1.

2.

3. 4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

4. It is surprising that any interpreters should suppose, as some do, that God Almighty is meant by the *God of this world*; as equivalent phrases are so often applied in scripture to the devil.

- these worldly distresses, a steady faith supports us.
13. Like the holy psalmist we cry out, *though we are in the midst of the valley of death, yet shall we walk*
14. *before God in the land of the living.* Under the influence, therefore, of this faith, we preach the gospel; fully assured, that that God who raised up Christ from the dead, will raise us up also, and all good Christians with us.
15. My sufferings, therefore, in the cause of religion, respect two great ends—your good—and the glory
16. of God. Hence arise our zeal and perseverance. Though the body shrink under the oppression, the
17. mind is strengthened more and more; and not suffering itself to be depressed by the light afflictions of
18. mortality, it rises above them. Unbounded by the
- CHAP. V. visible things of this world, it passes their limits into
 1. the regions of faith; where it contemplates the glories of eternity. Our earthly tabernacle, we know, will soon dissolve; but it is our great hope and consolation, that we shall have an everlasting one prepared
2. 3. 4. for us hereafter. Our miseries here make us wish, in God's good time, to arrive at our heavenly abode, where we may lay down the burthen of life for the joys
5. of immortality, of which God hath not only given us

13. It seems plain, that the apostle alludes to the cxvi. Psalm. It is a song of deliverance, in which, as the apostle says, the holy psalmist expresses his joy, through the influence of his faith. *I believed, and therefore have I spoken.* (See verses 3, 9, 10.)

3. Our translation of this verse runs, *If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked*; which is hardly sense. It should be, *Since, indeed, being thus clothed, we shall not be found naked.* See Park. Lex. for the use of *Erge* in this sense.

a promise,

a promise, but a foretaste also, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.

In the full confidence then of this, we consider
 ourselves here, as at a distance from home. In this
 world our happiness depends on hope, not enjoy-
 ment. We keep continually before us the prospect
 of our heavenly home, where we shall be present
 with the Lord. In the mean time, we live pre-
 paring ourselves with our best endeavour, for his
 gracious acceptance; waiting for that awful time,
 when we must all appear before the judgment-seat
 of Christ, and receive our doom according to our
 deeds.—How deeply I have been influenced by
 these great truths; and how sincerely I have preached
 them from a sense of their importance—God knows:
 and I hope you, who have had many testimonies of
 my sincerity on this head, will be able to vindicate
 me to those who may be too much governed by ap-
 pearances.

Whether the doctrine which we preach—the ac-
 ceptance of the Gentiles—be that wild doctrine,

6. *Knowing that we are at home in the body*, is a very bad transla-
 tion; indeed, it is directly contrary to the apostle's meaning. Ε-
 σθιμότες signifies properly, *sojourning*, not *being at home*.

9. Φιλοτιμημιδὲ signifies something more than *we labour*—it is
the height of our ambition.

13. Some interpreters suppose, that the apostle only alludes, in
 general, to the warmth and transport with which he sometimes
 speaks. I think (from what follows the 13th verse to the end
 of the chapter, and to the third of the next) the apostle had the
 Gentiles in his eye; and some able commentators, especially Dr.
 Pyle, are of the same opinion. It must be confessed, however,
 that the passage is very obscure, and the transition to the Gentiles
 rather harsh.

which

- which the Jews represent it to be, let God be judge : but if it be the truth, yours is certainly the gain. With what ideas of God's goodness can we suppose, that the mercies of the gospel are extended only to a part of mankind ? If Christ died for all, we must suppose, that all equally want the benefit of his death—the benefit of his laws—and the benefit of his resurrection.—Henceforth, therefore, all difference among nations is done away. Our blessed Lord himself, though once known under Jewish distinctions, is now no longer considered in that light : and every man, of whatever nation, who receives the gospel faithfully, by a thorough change of heart and life, belongs to Christ. The Jewish dispensation is entirely abolished ; superseded by the Christian.
18. 19. The goodness of God hath reconciled the whole world to himself, through Christ : and we are the appointed ministers of this reconciliation. This is all we pretend to ; exhorting you, as the ambassadors of Christ, to accept the gracious terms of the gospel ; and through holy lives, to be reconciled to God, who hath accepted Christ's death as an offering for
- CHAP. VI.
1. 2. fin. As his ministers also, we intreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain ; but to remember the words of the prophet, in which God promises a day of salvation to the Gentiles ; which day of salvation, be assured, is now fully come.

21. ΑΠΑΓΓΕΛΙΑ ΣΤΟΙΧΟΥ, made him a sin-offering. See Park. Lex.
2. See Isa. xlix. 5, 6, 8.

For myself, it has been my constant endeavour so
 to live, as to throw no scandal on the ministry of the
 gospel. I have not lived a life of worldly enjoyment,
 but in a constant state of suffering, either from the
 enemies of religion, or in the course of my ministerial
 labours. I have endeavoured also to unite the practice
 of truth with the knowledge of it; and to give my
 preaching force, not only by miracles, but by a holy
 life.—In the mean time, uninfluenced by the fa-
 vourable, or unfavourable opinions of men, I pass
 daily through that variety of contradictions which
 are ever incident to the life of an apostle—living and
 dying at the same time—persecuted, yet exalted—
 sorrowful, yet rejoicing—poor myself, yet making
 others rich—deprived of every thing, and yet possess-
 ing all things.

To you, my spiritual children, I speak freely on
 these subjects. My heart is open. But I fear the
filial affection is not equal to the *parental*. Let me
 earnestly entreat a full return of that love which I
 shew.—As the greatest instance of it, let me be-
 seech you to have no communication with the wicked
 practices of the heathen around you. Nothing can

14. There is something very expressive in the original word,
επιζυγαντες: *Be not like two animals yoked together, and drawing*
in opposite directions. Such are the lives of a pious Christian, and a
 wicked heathen.—The apostle, however, cannot mean here to
 exclude all communication between good and bad men. He
 plainly shews 1 Cor. v. 10, that this could not be avoided. His
 precept, therefore, goes no farther than to exclude his converts
 from joining in the idolatrous rites or other wicked practices of the
 heathen.

be of a nature more opposite to the holy religion you profess. Light is not more at variance with darkness, than the abominable rites and wicked lives of a heathen, with the holy worship and purity of a Christian. A Christian church is the temple of God. The prophetic promises of God's dwelling among his people, and being their God, belong now peculiarly to them. As the Jews were

17. are you now. *Separate yourselves*, saith the Lord now, as he did formerly : *touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you : I will be a father to you ; and you shall be sons and daughters unto me ;* saith the

CHAP.

VII.

1.

2.

Lord.—Since then, my brethren, you have these holy promises, let me exhort you to live suitably to them ; avoiding every impurity of life, and improving in every Christian duty. Reject not these kind admonitions : but receive me among your truest friends—as one who hath endeavoured, by all the means in his power, to promote your temporal and eternal happiness.

3. And yet I say not this from any doubts or dissatisfaction : for, as I have often told you, you are my greatest joy. I could live and die with you.

4. What I say proceeds from my affection to you :

16. 17. 18. See Levit. xxvi. 12. Isa. lii. 11. Jer. xxxi. 1.

2. Some commentators consider the apostle here as alluding to the deceits of their false teachers. I think it more probable, that by a negative, he means only modestly to imply an affirmative. *I have wronged no man : that is, I have done all in my power to assist every man.*

for

for I glory in you; and in all my distresses feel a comfort, from the thoughts of your progress in the gospel.—And yet the distress I felt on your account in Macedonia, before God graciously relieved me by the coming of Titus, was very great. The account he brought me of your penitence, and sincere regard for me, was indeed a comfort to me; and eased me of that distress which I felt on having written my former letter. That letter, I find, gave you the degree of sorrow which I wished. And I am now glad I wrote it, as it brought those, for whose particular use it was intended, to a sincere repentance. There are two kinds of sorrow, the *religious* and the *worldly*. The latter produces no effect. But the sorrow which you shewed, had every sign of godly sorrow. It produced an earnest vindication of yourselves—great distress and indignation at what had passed—and a vehement desire and zeal to avoid every offence for the future. On my part, be assured, that what I wrote was not through any partiality to one, or dislike to another; but merely from a concern for the good of the whole church. This is the great foundation of my joy. Nor was I a little happy to

5. How affectionate is the distress which the apostle shews in this, and in some of the succeeding verses; alluding to the opposition he had met with, and the severity he had used, which he feared might be too great. Without were *fightings*—within were *fears*.

11. Calvin, and others, suppose this verse contains the seven distinct marks of repentance in every true penitent. It seems rather to contain the penitential marks of different persons.

- find that you had occasioned the same joy in Titus.
14. For as I had boasted of you to him, it could not but be a great pleasure to me to find I had said nothing
15. but what he acknowledged to be the truth. His affection you have entirely gained by that respectful submission with which you received the injunctions
16. he brought. My confidence, therefore, in you is effectually secured.

CHAP.
VIII.

1. 2. 3. I must now make inquiry about collections for your poor brethren in Judea ; and must remind you of the charitable disposition of the churches of Macedonia ; which have shewn their liberality, in the midst of all their afflictions, even beyond their abilities ;
4. and have requested us to accept their bounty, and
5. to take upon us the distribution of it. Theirs was an instance of liberality even beyond my expectation : but it proceeded from those who had first given themselves to the Lord ; and were fully assured, that we should suffer them to do only what was agreeable to his will. I thought it proper, therefore, that
6. Titus should recommend this example to you, in
7. order to promote your liberality ; that as you have shewn yourselves endowed with other Christian graces, you may give an instance of this grace also.
8. You must not, however, consider my *exhortation* as a *command*. It is meant only to encourage you not to be behind any other church in proving the
9. sincerity of your love, and in following the example of your blessed Saviour, who, though he were rich, yet,

yet, for our sakes, made himself poor.—I give you no command, however, on this head; yet it is my advice to you not to put off this good work any longer. As it was talked of a year ago; and as you shewed then an inclination towards it, you will now, I hope, complete that intention, and raise a collection, according to every man's abilities. To make almsgiving an *act of religion*, it must proceed from a willing mind.—Yet I have no inclination to ease others, by laying a burthen on you: but to make that happy equality among you, which is so desirable among brethren. Your abundance, at present, supplies their need; and their abundance, in some future time, may supply yours. Such was the wise distribution of God when he provided for the necessities of our forefathers: *He that gathered much, had nothing over; and he that gathered little, had no lack.*

The same sentiments of this matter fill the heart of Titus; who wants not my exhortations to take the earliest opportunity to visit you. With him also I send another disciple, whose eminent graces are not a little distinguished among all the churches; inasmuch as he was the person appointed to assist me in the administration of their bounty—an office, which,

15. Exod. xvi. 18.

18. This other disciple is supposed to be St. Luke. *But his praise in the gospel*, is not supposed to arise from his *writing*, but *preaching* it. His gospel, it is thought, was not then written.

19. *Declaration of your ready mind.* This seems rather difficult. We do not easily understand how *the bounty of the Macedonian churches* could be a declaration of the *ready mind of the Corinthians*.

- find that you had occasioned the same joy in Titus.
 14. For as I had boasted of you to him, it could not but
 15. be a great pleasure to me to find I had said nothing
 16. but what he acknowledged to be the truth. His
 affection you have entirely gained by that respectful
 submission with which you received the injunctions
 he brought. My confidence, therefore, in you is
 effectually secured.

CHAP.
VIII.

1. 2. 3. I must now make inquiry about collections for your
 poor brethren in Judea; and must remind you of
 the charitable disposition of the churches of Macedonia;
 which have shewn their liberality, in the midst
 of all their afflictions, even beyond their abilities;
 4. and have requested us to accept their bounty, and
 5. to take upon us the distribution of it. Theirs was
 an instance of liberality even beyond my expectation:
 but it proceeded from those who had first given
 themselves to the Lord; and were fully assured, that
 we should suffer them to do only what was agreeable
 6. to his will. I thought it proper, therefore, that
 Titus should recommend this example to you, in
 7. order to promote your liberality; that as you have
 shewn yourselves endowed with other Christian
 graces, you may give an instance of this grace also.
 8. You must not, however, consider my *exhortation*
 as a *command*. It is meant only to encourage you
 not to be behind any other church in proving the
 9. sincerity of your love, and in following the example
 of your blessed Saviour, who, though he were rich,
 yet,

yet, for our sakes, made himself poor.—I give
 you no command, however, on this head; yet it is
 my advice to you not to put off this good work any
 longer. As it was talked of a year ago; and as you
 shewed then an inclination towards it, you will now, I
 hope, complete that intention, and raise a collection,
 according to every man's abilities. To make alms-
 giving an *act of religion*, it must proceed from a willing
 mind.—Yet I have no inclination to ease others,
 by laying a burthen on you: but to make that happy
 equality among you, which is so desirable among
 brethren. Your abundance, at present, supplies their
 need; and their abundance, in some future time, may
 supply yours. Such was the wise distribution of God
 when he provided for the necessities of our forefathers:
*He that gathered much, had nothing over; and he that
 gathered little, had no lack.*

The same sentiments of this matter fill the heart
 of Titus; who wants not my exhortations to take
 the earliest opportunity to visit you. With him
 also I send another disciple, whose eminent graces
 are not a little distinguished among all the churches;
 inasmuch as he was the person appointed to assist me
 in the administration of their bounty—an office,
 which,

15. Exod. xvi. 18.

18. This other disciple is supposed to be St. Luke. *But his
 praise in the gospel*, is not supposed to arise from his *writing*, but
preaching it. His gospel, it is thought, was not then written.

19. *Declaration of your ready mind.* This seems rather difficult.
 We do not easily understand how *the bounty of the Macedonian
 churches* could be a declaration of *the ready mind of the Corinthians*.

- which, among so many censurers, I did not care to
 21. undertake by myself; as it is my constant endeavour
 to preserve a fair appearance, as much as possible,
 22. even in the sight of man.—With these two dis-
 ciples I shall send a third, who hath always shewn
 himself very active in the affairs of the gospel; and
 is particularly desirous to visit you, since the pleasing
 23. account I have given him of your situation.—If,
 therefore, any inquiries are made with regard to these
 three disciples, be assured, that Titus is my parti-
 cular assistant and fellow-labourer; and that the
 other two were engaged in a trust of the same kind
 by the Macedonian churches, and are faithful mi-
 24. nisters of the gospel. You will shew them that
 kindness, therefore, that is due to the churches they
 represent; and agreeable to that favourable impression
 of you which I have given them.

CHAP.

IX.

- As to your raising a collection, I can have no doubt.
 1. 2. I know your ready zeal, which I have boasted of to
 the churches of Macedonia, with a view to incite
 3. 4. 5. the charity of others. I am only afraid, that you
 may not be entirely ready when the time demands:
 and for this purpose I send these brethren to you, not
 to take your collections, but only to give you notice
 to have them prepared; lest if any of the Macedo-
 nian Christians come with me, and we should find

But in some good copies *ἡμεῖς* is read instead of *υμεῖς*, which sets all
 to rights.—The choice of the churches is here made by the
ἡμεῖς, which signifies the *holding up of hands*; in opposition to
 the *ἡμεῖς*, or election by the *imposition of hands*.

22. Supposed to be Apollos.

you

you unprepared ; I, who have boasted so much of you, and you, of whom I have boasted, may be ashamed together.

The particular sum which is proper for each to 6.
 give, must be left to every man's discretion. Only
 this I must say in general, that he who soweth plen- 7.
 tifully, shall also reap plentifully. Let no man,
 however, give from any motive but that of a chari- 8.
 table heart. Nothing else can please that gracious
 Master, who is able to add more and more to his
 liberal servants—who can increase their power of
 doing good here ; and (as the psalmist speaks of the 9.
 truly charitable man) *give their righteousness its*
eternal reward hereafter.—May that God, who 10.
 enableth you to do works of charity, reward you for
 them among his faithful servants ! And may he en- 11.
 rich you more and more in those graces which re-
 dound so much to his glory ! For your charity does 12.
 not spend itself in its first intention, that of adminis-
 tring to the wants of the necessitous ; but becomes af- 13.
 terwards the source of praise and thanksgiving to God,
 in which all those pious Christians, who are assisted
 by it, unite ; while they look up to the great Giver
 with gratitude, for your charity, as well as all the
 other instances of his goodness ; and join in prayers for 14.
 you, the blessed instruments of it.—Thanks be to 15.
 God for extending the influence of one virtue through
 so wide a range † !

9. See Ps. cxii. 9.

† In what a grand and noble light the apostle places alms-giving
 in these last four verses !

CHAP.

X.

1. 2.

- I must now change my subject. I am sorry to find there are still among you some who represent me as a deceiver, and set at variance my behaviour, when absent and present; making even my bodily infirmities the ground of their offence. Such persons I should rather wish to reclaim by gentleness, than treat with apostolic severity. Why should they dwell upon the weakness of my bodily powers? Of what consequence are they? It is not through the powers of nature that I exercise my office. It is not through them, but through the power of God, that the prejudices of mankind are conquered—that all the vain opinions and reasonings of men are subdued—that a profane and idolatrous world is brought to the knowledge of God—and that the stubborn heart of man is opened by faith and obedience to the law of Christ. From the same high authority also I have the power to punish such offenders as are not yet reduced to obedience; but, notwithstanding the submission of others, still persist in their opposition; judging by mere appearances; and forming opinions of me by such rules as they would not submit to themselves. If I should exert towards such persons a little more of that authority which God hath given me to keep in awe notorious offenders, I should not, perhaps, exceed my commission. It would then be found, not only that my letters have their weight, (which they allow,) but that my presence also would be accompanied with authority. I shall not, however, imitate the vanity of those, who have no scale of comparison but themselves: nor boast

boast of my own gifts, which are merely distributed to me by God for your sake. I claim nothing myself, being enabled solely by God to preach the gospel among you. And not wishing to build on the labours of others, I have hope, that when your faith shall be fully established, I may enlarge my views, and carry the gospel into regions still more remote. 15. 16.

—Thus will all boasting cease, where the glory of God is the great end. A man's own commendation of himself is of no value : let us endeavour to obtain the only commendation worth our pursuit—the approbation of God. 17. 18.

CHAP.
XI.

Yet ascribe it not to folly and vanity, if I should speak a little of my own labours. Greatly concerned I am for you all, that you may persevere in the gospel, and that you may never be prevented by designing men, from attending to its plain and simple truths.—I hope you never will, till a better Saviour, a better Spirit, and a holier gospel be preached unto you. For myself, I imagine my labours among you are not inferior to those of any apostle. Inferior I may be to many in elocution and address : but I take upon me to say, I am inferior to none in preaching the gospel in sincerity and truth. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

But perhaps it may seem an offence, and be considered as a debasement, that I have laboured for my 7.

16. *Not to boast of another man's line of things made ready to our hand.* This obscure expression, and others in this epistle, seem to refer to some particular person, who, through undue pretences, had interfered with St. Paul's church at Corinth.

- own maintenance, while I preached the gospel among
8. you—that I received from other churches, and not
9. from you—and that even while I was with you, I received my maintenance from Macedonia.
10. 11. This, indeed, is the truth, and I make it my boast.
12. But if any of you conceive it shews a want of love to you, he is greatly mistaken. The real cause is, that I may take away all occasion of reproach from those among you who pretend, though not perhaps
13. with truth, to this disinterestedness themselves. I fear there are some such designing men among you.
14. 15. Satan himself pretended to be an angel of light: it cannot be matter of wonder, therefore, if his ministers should follow his example, and draw on themselves a like destruction.
16. Let me, then, in opposition to these teachers, boast a little of my own labours, however weak this boasting may appear. Whether they glory in their Jewish
17. 18. or in their Christian advantages, I can place myself on an equality with them. Nor can you take amiss
19. my boasting; inasmuch as, however wise you think yourselves, you suffer more from your new instructors.
20. Your understandings are imposed on; your possessions are freely taken; your persons are insulted:
21. while we, the apostles of Christ, are treated with every reproach. Let me, then, assume some boldness in this matter; and shew them, whether, on a com-

13. 14. 15. Let it all along be remembered, that these censures were made by an *inspired apostle*. It does not belong to *us* to form such judgments.

parison,

parison, I have not more to say than they.—Can 22.
 they claim more privileges from the law than I
 claim?—Or, if they claim as ministers of the 23. 24. 25.
 gospel, (allow my boasting,) can they shew such la- 26. 27.
 bours as I have endured—the stripes—the imprison-
 ments—the dangers by sea and land—the various
 terrors of death—the fatigues—the watchings—the
 want both of food and raiment? Besides all these 28.
 bodily afflictions, I am daily oppressed with those
 cares, which arise from an attention to so many
 churches. This multiplies my distresses. Who, in 29.
 all these communities, is weak, whose weakness I do
 not feel, and endeavour to assist? Who is per-
 verted, and I am not on fire to recover him? If 30.
 any boasting be allowable, it may be allowable, at
 least, to boast of sufferings. God knoweth the truth 31. 32.
 of what I affirm. My persecutions, indeed, began
 from the very first moment of my preaching the
 gospel; when the governor of Damascus, at the in-
 stigation of the Jews, endeavoured early to apprehend
 me, and I evaded his search by a stratagem. On 33.
 that occasion, and ever since, have I been graciously
 delivered by the goodness of God.

24, &c. Many of these distresses, which the apostle enumerates, are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles.—The *thirty-nine stripes* he received from the Jews. They were inflicted commonly with a scourge of three thongs, and were the utmost that could be inflicted. See Deut. xxv. 3. *Beating with rods* was a punishment inflicted by heathen magistrates, particularly the Romans. See Acts xvi. 23.

25. *A day and a night I have been in the deep.* Some explain this passage by supposing he had been in an open boat; others, on a plank.

33. See Acts ix. 25.

CHAP.
XII.

But on this subject I have said enough. To this I could add visions and revelations. I could tell you of a person, who, about fourteen years ago, was carried into heaven; but whether in the body or in the spirit, God only knoweth. There he saw and heard what human language cannot describe. Of such glorious revelations a man might boast: but for myself, I will boast only of my infirmities. And yet, if I should boast, I speak only the truth. But I forbear; as it may occasion, among my opposers, a disagreeable comparison between such pretensions and my present appearance. These bodily infirmities have, no doubt, been given me by a gracious Providence, to repress that undue exaltation which might arise from such heavenly communications; and mine adversaries have found the means to turn them to my disadvantage. I have often earnestly besought the Lord to remove this evil from me. But God assists his servants in his own way: and though my petitions were not granted in the manner in which I hoped, I was assured that God's grace should be

2. The apostle says, *I knew a man in Christ*: but this is only a modest way of expressing *himself*, whom he certainly meant.

7. Dr. Whitby, and other good interpreters, are of opinion, that by *the thorn in the flesh*, St. Paul only means his bodily infirmities. Indeed, Dr. Whitby's arguments are so strong, that I think they cannot be refuted. — In our translation, the *thorn in the flesh*, and the *messenger of Satan*, are made the same. It should be translated, *a thorn in the flesh*; *that the messenger of Satan*, &c. Some commentators suppose, and I think it is no unlikely conjecture, that this *thorn in the flesh* was particularly an impediment in his speech; the same which disqualified Moses from speaking to Pharaoh. Exod. iv. 10.

sufficient for me ; and that the greater my weakneses were, the more evident would be the gracious assistance I should receive. I boast, therefore, of infirmities, which shew that the power of Christ dwells in me ; for whose sake, I can even take pleasure in those infirmities, and in that disgrace, opposition, and persecution, which arise from them ; because, in fact, my weakness is the greatest indication of that heavenly Power that assists me. 10.

Thus you compel me to that boasting, which you ought to have prevented, by defending my character against those who have maligned me : for though, in myself, I am nothing ; yet am I, through the grace of God, on an equality with the first apostles. I have surely shewn among you all the signs of an apostle, by refusing no labour in preaching the gospel ; and by confirming the truth of it by miracles. In what instance are you inferior to other churches, except in my not receiving any maintenance among you ? This is the only injury I have done you. I am now preparing, a third time, to visit you ; and I shall act then, as I have hitherto done, by putting you to no expence on my account. It is you, not your possessions, that I aim at. I am like those parents who lay up for their children ; but will not suffer their children to contribute any thing to them. — What would I not suffer, for the sake of your happiness ! — I only wish the return which I receive was equal to my love. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15.

I know it hath been said, that I suffer others to draw money from you on my account, though I impose 16.

17. pose nothing on you myself.—Let them name any
 18. person whom they suspect of such artful dealings. I
 sent Titus among you, and another disciple. Did
 either of these act deceitfully with you? Or can any
 one instance be shewn, in which those disciples fol-
 lowed not the example which we have set them?

19. Think not that I want to apologize for myself. I
 speak before God, I have no end in what I say, but
 20. your edification. I fear that I shall find many among
 you such as I wish not; and that they shall find me
 such as they wish not. This will certainly be the
 case, if those factions and contentions continue still,

21.
 CHAP.
 XIII.

1. 2. I still find among you that uncleanness and impurity
 which I have so often bewailed. In this my ensuing
 visit, I shall certainly bring these sinful professors to
 a strict account; and hear what can be said for and
 against them. And I now repeat, what I told you
 before, that if I find cause of offence, I will not
 3. spare; but will in person give those impure members
 of your church that proof which they enquire for,
 4. of my power in Christ. For as our blessed Lord, in
 his human state, suffered all the weaknesses of hu-
 manity, and was afterwards raised to glory; so we,
 his apostles, however weak we may appear, as to

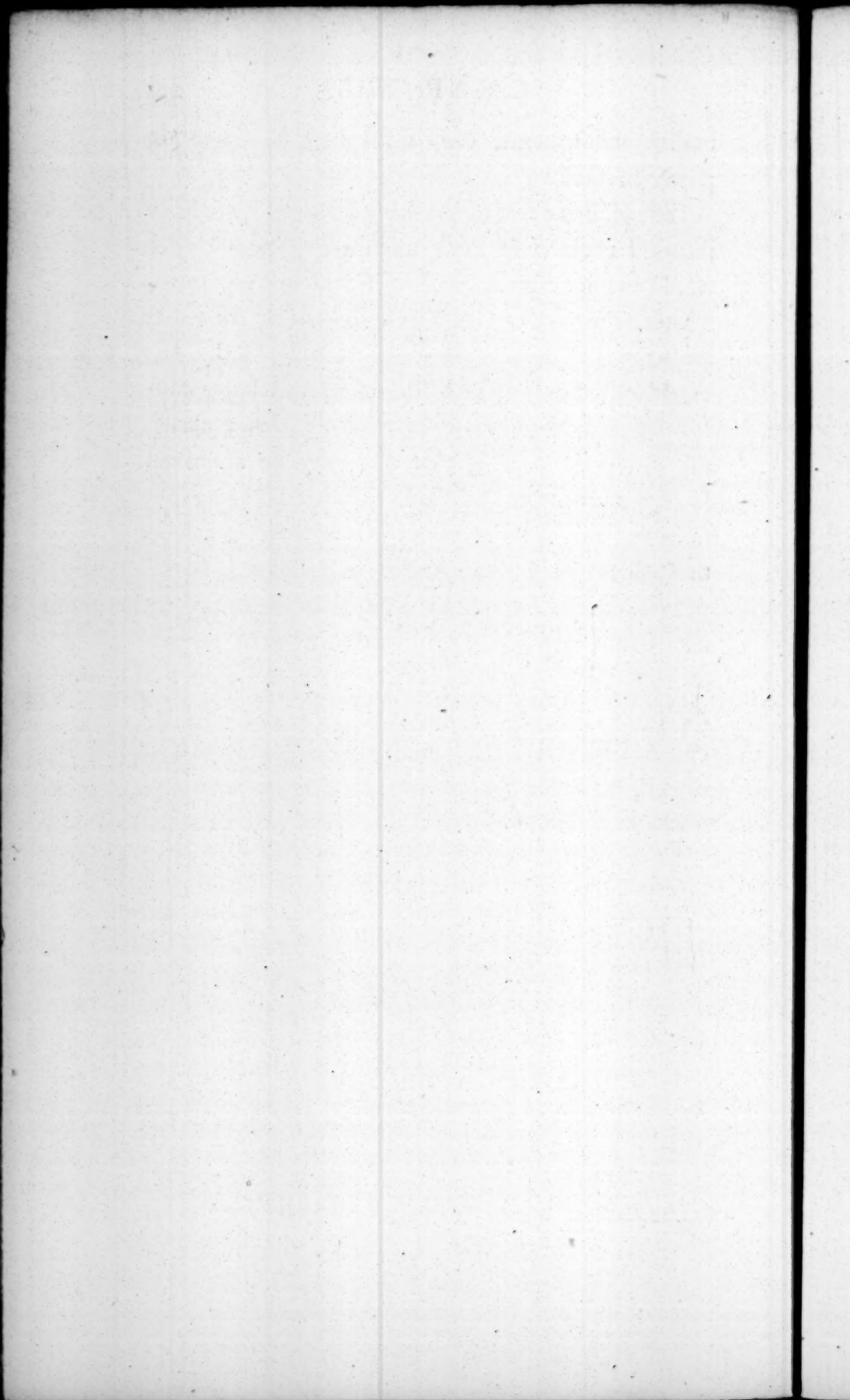
3. The apostle seems to threaten that severity which was some-
 times exercised towards notorious offenders. But it should be
 observed, first, that this severity was exercised by *apostles*, under
 the immediate direction of God; and therefore cannot become a
 rule to us—and secondly, that the apostle's *threatenings* seem ge-
 nerally to have been so well directed, as to render the *execution* of
 them needless.

bodily endowments, can, through him, exert the power of God.

Instead, however, of inquiring for a proof of Christ in *us*; I could wish these members of your church would inquire after a proof of Christ in *themselves*—whether they are of Christ's family—or whether they are among those who are disapproved by God. For us, I trust they will not find us of this latter class. But let them consider us in what light they please; my prayer to God is, that *they* may be approved. If they are accepted of God, they need fear nothing from us: for it is not even in our power to censure those who act in conformity to religion. It will prove, indeed, the highest pleasure to me to find my hands thus bound up, as it were, by your penitent and holy lives. It is for this reason that I give you notice of my intention to visit you; that when I come, I may lay all severity aside; and shew you, how much more God desires your repentance than your punishment.

In conclusion, my brethren, be assured, that peace, and happiness, and holy joy from God, will be the never-failing consequence of an increase in Christian perfection. Above all things, let unbounded benevolence be exercised among you; in which holy bond the brethren here desire to be connected with you.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.



P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

AFTER St. Paul had left Galatia, where he had planted the gospel, his new converts were seduced, as they had been in other places, by certain Judaizing Christians, who taught the observance of the Jewish law, *as necessary to salvation*. This was the first heresy, as we observed before, that obtained in the Christian church. The apostle, hearing of it at Corinth, (where it is supposed he then was,) writes the Galatians this epistle.

He first assures them, that the doctrines he had preached were the same which the apostles had taught at Jerusalem. This, probably, had been denied : for it appears as if these Judaizing Christians had represented Paul himself as an upholder of circumcision. (See ch. v. 11.) — The apostle then, about the middle of the second chapter, begins his argument, by shewing the superiority of the gospel to the law ; which he continues (answering objections as he proceeds) to the end of the epistle. He himself, when he was *among the Jews*, (according to his usual maxim of *becoming all things to all men, that he might by all means save some,*) had observed many of the customs of the law, which he
conceived

conceived to be matters of mere indifference. But here, when he writes to *the Gentiles*, who had been seduced to believe *these things necessary to salvation*, he alters his language; and, in pointed terms, shews them to be vain and ineffectual.

Mr. Paley, with great propriety and acuteness, observes the different manner in which St. Paul treats the *same subject*, in the two epistles to the Romans, and the Galatians. As he had himself founded the Galatian church, he rests the point chiefly on *authority*; of which Mr. P. produces instances from ch. i. 6. 11. 12.—iv. 11. 12. 20.—v. 2. 8. —But as the apostle had not founded the Roman church, he treats it with more respect; and grounds what he says on *argument*. See *Horæ Paul.* p. 59.—The subscription from Rome, at the end of this epistle, is manifestly spurious.

EPISTLE

TO THE

GALATIANS.

PAUL, an apostle immediately by divine commission, and all the brethren which are with me, salute the churches of Galatia. Grace and peace be with you from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who died to deliver us from the effects of sin, through the goodness of God, to whom be glory for ever. Amen!

CHAP.

I.

1. 2. 3. 4.

I am surpris'd to find you have already shewn so much unsteadiness in the profession of your religion; and that you have been so easily led aside by those who pervert the gospel. Assure yourselves, there is no other gospel besides that which we have preached unto you: and whoever takes upon him-

5.

6.

7.

8. 9.

7. Ο εκ τινος αλλο, is rendered very improperly in our translation, *which is not another*. It should be, *which is owing to nothing else*.

self either to add to it, or diminish from it, shall most assuredly incur the wrath of God. Have I any
 10. interest of my own in this matter? Or am I ap-
 11. pointed by man to the office of an apostle? The
 gospel which I have preached is not the invention
 12. of man: it was revealed to me immediately from
 13. heaven. You know the character I once bore in the
 14. church of God; and the extraordinary zeal I had for
 15. 16. the religion of my forefathers. But when God, in
 his mercy, called me to preach the gospel to the
 heathen, I made no application to any man for far-
 17. ther instruction. I had not even a conference with
 the apostles at Jerusalem: but went into Arabia,
 18. and returned by Damascus. Three years afterwards,
 19. I made a short stay with Peter at Jerusalem; where
 I saw none of the other apostles, except James, the
 20. Lord's brother. This, you may be assured, is the
 21. truth. I afterwards went into Syria and Cilicia;
 but was personally unknown to the churches of Ju-
 22. 23. dea. They had heard only of my having formerly
 24. persecuted the gospel, and of my conversion after-

10. Do I persuade *you* to obey men or God?

12. Ananias seems to have been the most likely person to instruct Paul: but if we turn to the history (Acts ix.) there is not a syllable about Ananias's instructing him. He was also certain days with the disciples at Damascus (Acts ix. 19.): but we have no account of his being instructed by them.

19. *Brother* signifies here, only a near *kinsman*. He was son to the Virgin's sister, as is commonly supposed.

20. The apostle, in this account of his proceedings, means only to shew, that he had not received his doctrine from men. But he asserts in a very solemn manner the truth of what he said: because his conversion was a very wonderful event.

wards;

wards; for which they glorified God. Fourteen
 years after, I went again to Jerusalem with Barnabas,
 taking Titus with me; and under the guidance of
 the Holy Spirit, I communicated apart to the prin-
 cipal apostles there, the doctrines which I preach
 among the Gentiles; that I might avoid, both for
 the past and future, every handle of offence. But
 none of them thought it necessary that Titus, who
 was of Gentile extraction, should be circumcised.
 In our assemblies were some Jewish zealots, who
 came with no good intention. But notwithstanding
 my readiness to comply, on all innocent occasions,
 with the prejudices of others, I thought this a point
 which demanded great firmness. Thus the judaizing
 opinions of those, who wished to add the ceremo-
 nies of the law to the gospel, found as little coun-
 tenance at Jerusalem, as they had found before at
 Antioch. Nor, indeed, did the apostles at Jerusalem,
 in the conference we had together, add any thing
 to my doctrine. On the contrary, they were so
 fully convinced of the truth of my apostleship, that
 even James, Peter, and John, received me as a
 fellow-labourer in Christ; and desired only, that, in
 my

2. The apostle says, *he communicated privately to them of reputation*. The reason of this reserve seems to be, that he feared giving offence if he should publish *openly among the Jews*, the abolition of the Jewish ceremonies, and the reception of the Gentiles. The times, at Jerusalem at least, would not yet bear it.

10. The Jewish poor found a considerable resource in the sacrifices of the temple, on which they greatly depended. But such

my apostleship among the Gentiles, I should remember the poor in Judea, to which I readily consented.

11. — Some time after, when Peter came to Antioch,

12. I freely opposed him. He had not scrupled to eat with the Gentiles; till some Jewish Christians coming to him from James, he was afraid of giving them offence, and temporised with them more than appeared to me agreeable to the truth of the gospel:
13. and in this he was countenanced by some others;
14. and even by Barnabas himself. When I observed this, I publicly told Peter, that, as he had so far laid aside the Jewish law, as to converse freely with the Gentiles; it could not but appear strange, that he should give the least encouragement to the Gentiles to observe the ceremonies of the Jews.

15. In fact, my brethren, even we, who have by birth
16. the privileges of Jews, acknowledge, that we are not justified by these privileges, but by the faith of Christ. And for the sake of this justification, we
17. believe in Christ, and relinquish the law. If we seek justification by the law, what do we make of Christ,
18. by whom we pretend to be justified? Not surely the minister of salvation. If I have recourse to the law, I acknowledge myself still unjustified by Christ.
19. 20. But by renouncing the law, I live through Christ,

of them as became Christians were probably deprived of this advantage, and were rendered more necessitous than the poor in other places. We see St. Paul in several of his epistles stir the Gentile Christians to make collections for the Jewish.

12. See Acts x. 28; and also xi. 3.

who

who gave himself for me. Otherwise, I should 21.
frustrate the grace of God, and substitute legal right-
eousness instead of the death of Christ.

CHAP.
III.

How is it, then, that you, who have been so fully 1. 2.
instructed in the cause and design of Christ's death,
should suffer yourselves to be so strangely misled?
Did you receive the *miraculous gifts of the Spirit*
from the law, or from the gospel? After such *hea-* 3.
venly favours, do you expect to be perfected by
carnal ordinances? Why have you suffered so much 4.
for the gospel, if the efficacy of the gospel be now
relinquished? Were the miracles which have been 5.
wrought among you, and the Holy Spirit which you
have received, derived from the observances of the
law, or from the power of the gospel?

Even Abraham himself was justified by faith; and 6.
is therefore, in fact, the father of *all* true believers;
for God, who, from the beginning, intended to jus- 7. 8.
tify the Gentiles by faith, assured him, *That all the*
nations of the earth should be blessed in him. So that, 9.
you see, Abraham, and all who pursue his steps, are
justified in the same manner. The law could not 10.
save. It required *strict obedience*: and as no man
could pretend to this, no man, of course, could be

2. 2 Cor. xi. 4. 1 Cor. xii.

5. This appeal to miracles, at that early period, when so many
could have contradicted the appeal, if it had not been just, is a
strong argument for the certainty of miracles.

6. 8. 10. See Gen. xv. 6. Gen. xii. 3. Deut. xxvii. 26.

8. Προευγγελισατο, preached the gospel unto him—that is, gave
him that idea of salvation which he intended afterwards to publish
to all the world.

11. justified by the law. A prophet under the law itself
 12. tells you, that *the just shall live by faith*. By the
law, therefore, it is plain they could not live.—
 13. From that curse, therefore, which the law could not
 avert, Christ hath redeemed us, by suffering the ac-
 14. cursed death of the cross: and hence the Gentiles,
 receiving the blessing as Abraham's seed, have in-
 15. herited the promises through faith. Even a human
 covenant is of such force, that no man can disannul
 16. it, or make any addition to it. The covenant,
 therefore, which God made with Abraham, (and
 which, by the very tenor of it, was plainly restricted
 17. to *believers*,) could not be altered by the *law*, which
 was given four hundred and thirty years afterwards.
 18. If the blessing had come by the *law*, it could not
 be derived, as it manifestly is, from the *promise made*
to Abraham.
 19. 20. It may be asked, then, What end the law answer-
 ed? Why was it given?—It was given to restrain
 wickedness, till the gospel should be revealed, and
 the promise should take effect. But from the very
 mode of its delivery, it could not *be that promise*.
 For Moses stood forth a mediator only between God

11. Habak. ii. 4.

14. Deut. xxi. 23.

20. *Now a mediator*, &c. There are two parties in every cove-
 nant. God, and all the nations of the earth were the parties to the
covenant of promise. Afterwards, in the *covenant of the law*, God,
 and the nation of the Jews were the parties. The covenant of the
 law, therefore, could not disannul the covenant of grace, because
 only one of the parties of that covenant was present, namely God.
 A mediator is between two parties, as the text says, but God is
 only one of those parties.

and the *Israelites*; whereas God's original promise was *universal*; it was that promise, in which *all the nations of the earth* were to be blessed.

Is the law, then, inconsistent with the promises of God?—By no means. The law did not pretend to justify. The whole world was under sin, waiting for the redemption of Christ; and the Jewish part it were prepared by their law for that redemption. The law, therefore, in fact, was only a kind of school-master, to lead us to the knowledge of Christ. After the attainment of the end, the means are no longer necessary. All are now the children of God, through faith in Christ. Baptism is the bond of this union. Distinctions are abolished. All are become one in Christ; in whom you, as well as the Jews, are the seed of Abraham, and heirs of the promise.—Even we, who are the natural descendants of that patriarch, consider ourselves, while we continue under the legal dispensation, in the light only of children, under the discipline of tutors and guardians. The gospel hath now pronounced us of age.

24. What is in this verse called *justification*, is in the 9th and 14th called a *blessing*; in the 18th, an *inheritance*; in the 21st, *righteousness*; in the same verse, *life*; and in the 22^d, a *promise*. I only mean to infer from the loose application of these terms, how much better we come at the sense of the sacred writers, by comparing one part of scripture with another, than by taking a doctrine from a particular text or word.

27. The noble metaphor of the original, *have put on Christ*, is too bold to be inserted in a tame exposition. On becoming Christians, the apostle tells his converts, *they have put on Christ*—they are clothed with him—God, when he looks at them, sees nothing, as it were, but Christ.

4. *His son made of a woman*, exactly corresponds with the original promise of a Redeemer—in the *seed of the woman*; not of the

8. 9. 10. age. You, also, who were before the servants of sin, are now adopted, together with us, into the same inheritance. In the days of your idolatry, you served the only Gods you were acquainted with. But now, when you are the *adopted children* of the true God, whence is it that you wish to put yourselves in *bond-*
11. 12. *age* to the Jewish law? Let not my labours among you be in vain: but follow my example.

- As far as I am myself concerned, I have no
13. 14. 15. ground of complaint against you. Amidst all my persecutions and infirmities, you have ever treated
16. me with the warmest affection. Do you, then, consider me now as an enemy, because I speak freely to
17. you? Take care, lest your new teachers mean only to exalt *themselves*, by infusing prejudices against *us*.
18. You have shewn your affection to me, when I have been with you: give me equal instances of it in my
19. absence.—For you I feel the pains of a second birth; that you may become the children of grace.
20. —Heartily do I wish to be present with you,

man. This can be said of no person but Christ. The *seed of the woman* is an expression unparalleled in scripture.

6. St. Paul perhaps alludes to a custom among the Jewish slaves, who were not allowed to use the titles of *abba* and *imma* (father and mother) to the master and mistress of a family. These words had then a more enlarged meaning than with us.

12. The abbreviated passage, *Οτι καγω ως υμεις*, should rather be translated, *I was as ye are*.

13. What the particular infirmity was, of which the apostle speaks, we know not: but, it is probable, he means what he elsewhere calls *a thorn in the flesh*; see 2 Cor. xii. 7.

17. *Ημεας* instead of *υμεις*, as we find it in some copies, makes much better sense.

20. In the original it means, that *I might change my voice*—(*αλλαξας φωνην*) that is, according to the matter, whether I commend, exhort, or threaten.

that

that I might accommodate my discourse to your real circumstances; for, indeed, I have my doubts about you.

But let me ask you a question. Will not you, 21.
 who profess so great a reverence for the law, be influenced by it? There you read that Abraham had 22.
 two sons—one by a bond-maid; the other by a free-
 woman; and that the former was born in the or- 23.
 dinary course of nature; the latter, in consequence of
 God's extraordinary promise. This we interpret as 24. 25.
 an allegory. The bond-woman represents the law;
 and the free-woman the gospel. We Christians, 26. 27. 28.
 therefore, as Isaac was, are accounted the children 29.
 of the promise; and as such, we inherit the ill usage
 which Isaac met with. But what saith the scripture? 30.
*Cast out the bond-woman and her son; for the son of
 the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the*

23. Gen. xviii.

24. St. Paul probably constructs this allegory on Isaiah liv. 1.

29. This is commonly interpreted of the ill usage which Isaac received from Ishmael (Gen. xxi. 9.). In what it consisted we are not told. The short Mosaic account only says, that *Ishmael mocked*. But from the whole tenor of the history, and from the apostle's application of it here, we are led to suppose the case to have been this.—Ishmael seems to have been brought up by his mother Hagar, under the notion of being *the child of promise*. Hagar herself was so exalted with this idea, that she gave early offence to her mistress Sarah by her behaviour. And though she appears to have been more decent afterwards, yet we may well suppose she never let the idea drop; and that it was sufficiently instilled into Ishmael.—When, therefore, Isaac was born, which was about thirteen or fourteen years after the birth of Ishmael, we may conceive how great the disappointment was; and that both the mother and the son would be naturally inclined to shew their dislike, on all occasions, to the real heir of the promise.

31. *free-woman.* So then, my brethren, we are not the
 CHAP. children of the bond-woman, or the law; but are
 V. freed from its obligation, by becoming the children
 1. of the free-woman, or the gospel.—Maintain,
 therefore, that liberty which you have received from
 Christ; and submit not again to the yoke of bondage.
 2. While you expect justification from circumcision,
 3. 4. you can never receive it from Christ. The law de-
 mands perfect obedience. He, therefore, who ex-
 pects justification on this ground, gives up all claim
 to it from grace; which is the Christian's peculiar
 5. 6. hope. With him, circumcision and uncircumcision
 are indifferent matters: the only anchor on which he
 rests, is that faith which produces real love to God
 and man.
 7. 8. You had once, indeed, just notions of religion.
 How is it that you have now lost them? Not,
 9. 10. certainly, through your first instructor.—But a
 little leaven will easily infect a large mass. I trust in
 God, however, that you will be restored to a right
 way of thinking; and that the sins of those who dis-
 turb your faith, may rest on their own heads.
 11. Consider the persecutions I have met with from
 the Jews. Are they not testimonies, think you,
 12. that I preach no Jewish doctrines?—I would to
 God that every cause of seduction were removed

7. *You do run well; who did hinder you?* ΕΤΕΡΩΤΕ and ΑΙΕΚΟΨΕ are Olympic expressions. Literally they signify, *You did run well; who crossed, or confounded your course?*

from you; and that you would consider yourselves 13.
as called into a state of liberty. Only suffer not
your loose affections to take advantage of that li-
berty; but let your mutual love be shewn in mutual
good offices. For the whole moral law is fulfilled 14.
in this one precept, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as
thyself*. But if you are continually injuring each 15.
other, you provoke a return; and a circulation of
ill-offices of course succeeds. The *spirit of the gos-* 16.
pel alone can secure you against these unruly affec-
tions: it acts in continual opposition to them; and 17. 18.
if you live under its blessed influence, you may be
said, in one sense, to be above all law.

But take care, again I beseech you, that the gen- 19. 20. 21.
tle spirit of the gospel lead you not into any impuri- 22.
ties.—Take care that your lives be not marked
with any of those detestable characters which mark
the lives of the heathen—and that nothing, either
sensual or malevolent, may be seen among you. Pure

13. The words, *I would they were even cut off*, allude probably to those ecclesiastical censures of excommunication which the apostle elsewhere calls, *delivering over to Satan*.

17. The apostle, in this verse, describes that internal conflict which every true Christian must feel; and without which he ought not to suppose himself a Christian. The imperfections of this mortal state can never be so entirely overcome, but that we must, if we are sincere, feel in ourselves this conflict. If we do not, we may fairly conclude, we are suffering ourselves to be carried down the stream without resistance.

19. The apostle had given the same caution in the 13th verse; and not without great reason is the idea impressed; for we have often seen, both among ancient and modern fanatics, a strange mixture of *spiritual* and *carnal* love.

20. Φαρμακία signifies *poisoning* as well as *witchcraft*.

21. Κῶμοι signifies those *disorderly revellings* so common among the Greeks.

charity, with all its attendant graces, is agreeable to every law. We Christians should crucify, with our Saviour, all our sinful affections. If the Spirit give us life, it should, of course, guide our actions.

On the other hand, my brethren, I would not have you vain and conceited; provoking each other by the affectation of superior piety: but if you observe any thing offensive, let the offender be rebuked with gentleness; considering that you also yourselves are liable to temptation. Thus, like true Christians, kindly bear with each other. He who thinks the most highly of himself, may have the greatest reason to acknowledge he hath been deceived. But let every man examine *himself*, that he may have a real cause for rejoicing, which a comparison with another cannot furnish: for every man must answer for himself.

Be properly observant of the wants of your teachers. God requires this mark of sincerity. As the husbandman hath the recompence of his harvest for his seed; so shall you, from these temporal things, reap spiritual. During the short time we live in this

22. Here all Christian graces are mentioned as *the fruits of the Spirit*. And no doubt every good disposition is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit of God. Our own endeavours must undoubtedly be used. But if we believe the word of God, we must believe that his Holy Spirit will carry us to much greater heights of virtue than any endeavours of our own. At the same time, this reflection will teach us humility.

10. Christians, at that time, were neglected by all people but themselves: it was necessary, therefore, for them to be more attentive to each other's wants. It was for this reason they made so many collections for each other, of which we so frequently read.

world,

world, we should employ ourselves in acts of kindness to all; but our fellow Christians demand our particular attention.

You see how long a letter I have written to you 11.
with my own hand: yet, before I conclude, let me 12.
add, that they who would seduce you to the observ-
ances of the Jewish law, do it solely to avoid perse-
cution for the sake of the gospel: for they themselves, 13.
though circumcised, do not observe the law; but
press circumcision on you, merely that they may
glory in having made you profelytes. But God for- 14.
bid that I should glory in any thing, but in the cross
of Christ; through which the world is crucified unto
me, and I unto the world. As I just observed to 15.
you, circumcision and uncircumcision are indifferent
matters. A thorough change of heart and life is 16.
the only real badge of a Christian; and where this
is found, there will also be found the true Israelite;
and the peace of God will rest upon him.

11. Some critics translate this verse (as the words, they say, most properly import), *You see in what large letters I have written*: supposing that the apostle was not well skilled in the Greek character, and shewed his affection by writing in a language which he wrote so uneasily. Theophylact, Whitby, and Dodderidge, are all of this opinion. I own I prefer the other interpretation: and indeed it appears improbable, that a man of so liberal an education as St. Paul, born too in a Grecian city, and conversant in the Greek poets, should be unskilled in writing the Greek character.

12. The early emperors allowed the *Jews*, throughout the empire, to exercise their religion; and *circumcised Christians* were considered as *Jews*: if *uncircumcised*, they were persecuted. This remark will throw great light on this text and some others.

Let

17. Let no one, then, for the future, injuriously suspect me of judaizing. The persecutions I daily suffer, and have suffered, are sufficient testimonies of my fidelity to Christ.
18. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, my brethren. Amen!
-

17. Some interpreters suppose, the apostle alludes here to scars, or marks from ill usage, on his body. Others think, he rather figuratively alludes to those brands, or marks, which were often used in ascertaining the property of slaves. An allusion of the same kind occurs Rev. vii. 3.—This passage of St. Paul was greatly abused by the Franciscans, and other fanatical Christians, who used to imprint on their bodies the five wounds of Christ. The story (imposed as an article of faith by the popes of that day) that Jesus Christ himself marked St. Francis in this manner, is often recorded among other instances of popish imposition.

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

P R E F A C E

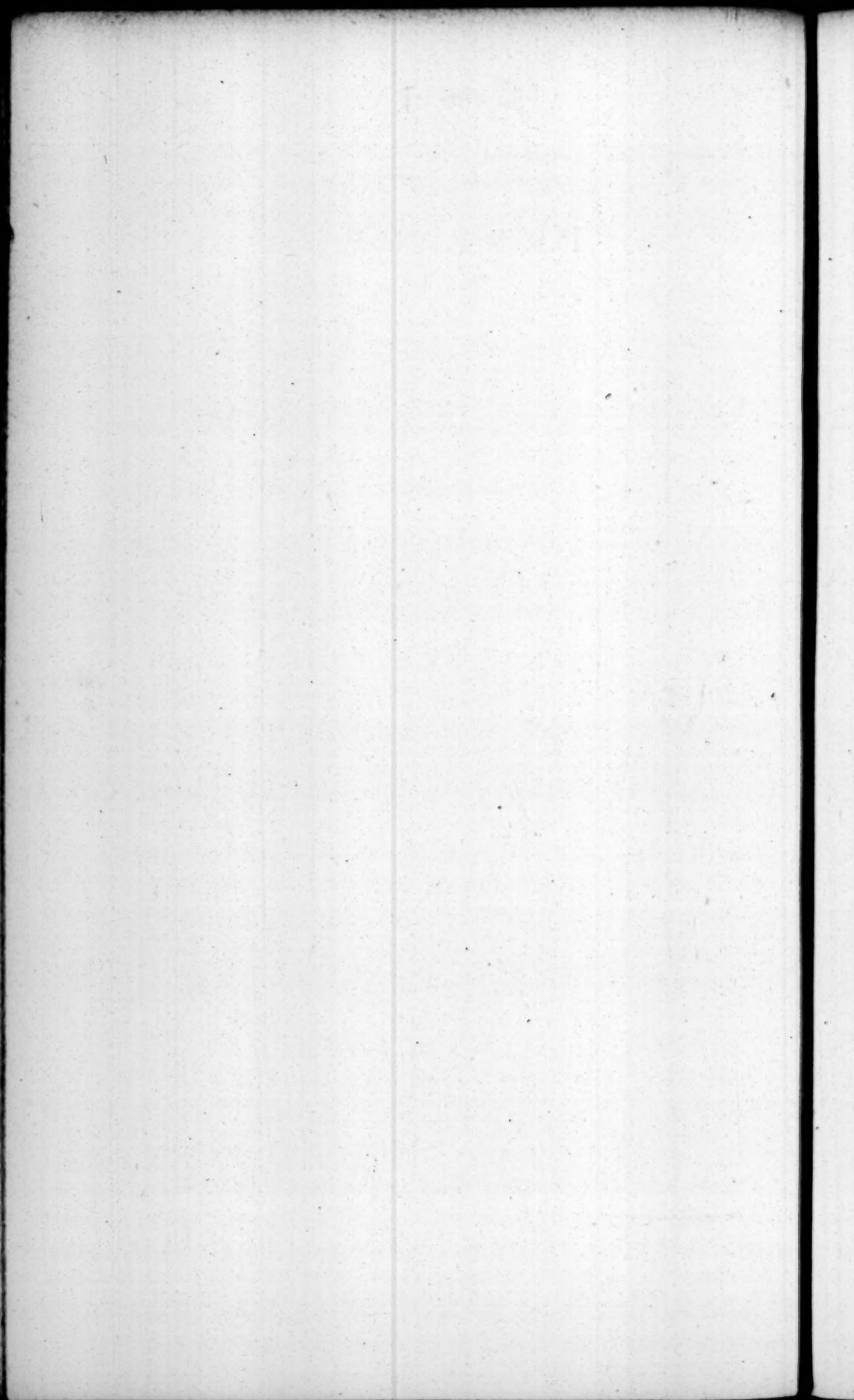
T O

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE to the EPHESIANS.

THOUGH the authenticity of this epistle hath never been disputed, a question hath arisen about its inscription ; some contending, that it should have been inscribed to the Laodiceans. It is a question, indeed, not yet settled among learned men ; but it is a happiness, that it is of little importance.

The apostle's design, in this epistle, is, first, to shew the great end of the gospel—that it was intended to be preached to all mankind—and that he was appointed the preacher of it to the Gentiles.—From hence he proceeds to exhort his converts against the practices in which they had formerly lived, and which, as Christians, they had renounced ; fraud and deceit of every kind ; and the pollutions of the world.—He next touches on relative duties ; and concludes with arraying his converts in the armour of a Christian.—The great scope, therefore, of the whole is, first, to inculcate the doctrines of the gospel—and secondly, the duties of it.

This is supposed to be the first epistle which St. Paul wrote, after he had been brought to Rome, on his appeal to Cæsa.



EPISTLE

TO THE

EPHESIANS.

CHAP.

I.

PAUL, an apostle by the will of God, to the church of Ephesus, grace, mercy, and peace ! 1.2.3.4.5.

—Blessed be God, who hath called us to the hope of everlasting life, and adopted us, before the foundation of the world, to be his children in Jesus Christ †. With what gratitude should we consider this 6.7.8.9.

† Some expressions in the 4th, 5th, and 11th verses, are among those which chiefly give occasion to many unguarded things which have been said on the doctrine of predestination. In those passages, I think, nothing is more evident, than that the apostle has not the least reference to the case of *particular* persons, but only *in general* to Jews and Gentiles; which latter God had determined, from the foundation of the world, in his own good time, to *elect*, or admit to all the blessings of the gospel. The apostle, indeed, (ver. 4.) says *we*, though he is speaking of the Gentiles. —Mr. Locke has a very long and useful note on this passage, in which he shews plainly, that “ St. Paul, who was

VOL. II.

R

the

10. this great act of mercy; and for ever praise that gracious Being, who, in his eternal goodness, hath declared a method of forgiving the sin of man through the death of a Saviour—a dispensation not partially distributed; but taking place immediately on the fall, and comprehending the whole race of mankind.
- 11.12.13. The Jews were first called; afterwards the Gentiles;
14. who may be assured, from receiving the *same* gifts of the Spirit, that they have received also the *same* inheritance and redemption.
- 15.16.17. It is the constant subject of my prayers and thank-
18. 19. fulness, that you may continue in union with Christ; and that your minds may be enlightened more and more, by contemplating the greatness of this dispensation; and the wonderful events, especially the

the apostle of the Gentiles, did often, in an obliging manner, join himself with the Gentile converts, under the terms *us* and *we*, as if he had been one of them." See Mr. Locke's note on this passage.

10. We do not, perhaps, understand the full force of the words, *which are in heaven, and which are in earth*. Some understand by them, *Jews and Gentiles*; others, the *dead and living*; but the noblest idea, I think, is this—The angelic and human nature were once in harmony, and in subjection to the Son of God. Man afterwards becoming disobedient, broke off from this great society, till in the fulness of time, *God should gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth*. I have not, however, expressed this idea in the exposition, as it is not the interpretation most generally received.

13. Acts xi. 17.

19. 20. Mr. Locke and others observe, and, I think, with great appearance of truth, that the apostle seems labouring in these verses to express the greatness of his ideas: *τι το υπερβαλλον μεγαλος της δυναμεις αυτης εις ημας της πισυντας κατα την ενεργειαν τε κρατους της εσχρας αυτης*.

21. These abstract names *principality, power, might, &c.* signify, in the eastern language, those who are invested with them.

resurrection

resurrection and exaltation of Christ, whereby God hath united unto himself the whole race of mankind in one vast, comprehensive scheme of salvation.

CHAP.
II.

Remember, then, that abyss of darkness, from which you have been delivered—that state of sin^{1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.} and corruption in which you once lived; and then consider the situation to which you are now raised. Christ's resurrection is an earnest of yours—of that double resurrection; first, from sin; and secondly, to eternal life; which is, through the goodness of God, your promised inheritance. Consider it, therefore, 8. 9. 10. always as the gift of God's goodness. Claim nothing on your own merits; but all from the grace of God in Christ; through faith in whom you are enabled to perform works acceptable to Him.—Remember, also, that you are now equally admitted^{11. 12. 13.} with the Jews to all the blessings of the gospel.^{14.} Though you were before ignorant even of the first principles of religion, you are now raised to a level with the peculiar people of God. All those rites^{15.} and ceremonies are abolished, which distinguished the Jew from the Gentile. Both are reconciled to^{16. 17. 18.} God in Christ. To both the gospel of peace is

2. The Jews had a notion that the air was inhabited by evil spirits; and Mr. Mede thinks, St. Paul favoured that opinion.

14. *The middle wall of partition*, alludes to the wall which separated the court of the Gentiles from the interior of the Jewish temple.

18. The word *προσάγωγη* alludes to the custom of introducing strangers into the presence of a prince.

19. 20. 21. preached; and through the same Spirit and the
 22. same mediator, both have equal access to the Father. You are, therefore, no longer foreigners; but members of the church of Christ—that universal church, founded upon prophets and apostles, in which Jesus Christ himself is the chief corner-stone; and in which God, by his Holy Spirit,

CHAP. now dwells; as he once inhabited the temple of
 III. the Jews.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. The adoption of the Gentiles is one of the great
 6. 7. 8. doctrines which I am commissioned to preach; and for preaching which I am now a prisoner. From God this office was assigned me. From that great source of truth, I, unworthy as I am, was commissioned to tell the Gentile world (what they had no conception of before) that they are heirs with
 9. 10. 11. the Jews in all the promises of the gospel. I am
 12. commissioned, also, to explain to them the nature of those holy promises, and of their access to the Father through faith; which great scheme of religion, though intended from the beginning of the world, is now first revealed, to the wonder and just

20. Some suppose, that St. Paul in this, and in other passages in which he alludes to architecture, accommodates himself to the taste of the Greeks, among whom architecture was in such esteem.

2. This is the longest parenthesis we almost any where meet with. It begins at this verse, and ends at the first verse of the next chapter. But I thought it made the sense easier to take it out of the parenthetical form.

4. St. Paul often speaks of the calling of the Gentiles as a mystery. See a note on Rom. xvi. 25.

astonishment

astonishment of all the intelligent part of the creation of God.

Consider my sufferings, therefore, as the source of ^{13.14.15.} your advantages. I thank God, they are. I repine not at them. I bow my knee to the Father of ^{16.17.} heaven and earth, entreating him to perfect his work; and by his blessed influence, to form in your hearts the true gospel-spirit of faith and love. I ^{18.19.20.21.} pray God give you as full and comprehensive a knowledge of Christianity as we mortals can attain! and fill your minds with his wonderful mercies and goodness through Christ; for which every thought of our hearts should be impressed with gratitude and praise!

CHAP.
IV.

Let me, then, beseech you to make your lives ^{1.2.3.} answerable to your profession; and to live with that meekness and unity among each other, which become Christians. You all form one body; are ^{4.5.} directed by the same Spirit; have one hope; and ^{6.} one Saviour; one faith; one baptism; and one ^{7.} God, the common Father of all.—It is true, in ^{8.} this great body, there are various distributions of God's grace; to which the holy Psalmist alludes, when mentioning the Messiah's triumphant ascen-

18. *The breadth, and length, and depth, and height.* This text is often taken notice of as very expressive. Bodies have only three dimensions, *breadth, length, and depth*; but the apostle measures the last as it were back again, from the *depth* to the *height*; expressing the *depth* from which we are delivered, and the *height* to which we are again exalted.

8. Pf. lxxviii. 18.

9. 10. sion, (which, by the way, is a proof of the reality of Christ's death; for if he rose and ascended, he must first have died and been buried,) he speaks of his *giving gifts to men*—some he appointed prophets, others evangelists and teachers; all of whom are necessary to establish the church—to oppose error—and to complete the great scheme of Christianity.
17. Let me exhort you, therefore, as members of this great body, to lay aside all the sinful practices of your past lives. While you were involved in blindness and ignorance, you were polluted with every kind of wickedness and sensuality. Remember the professions you have made as Christians, that

9. 10. There is great difficulty in the connection of these verses. I have given Mr. Locke's interpretation, which seems to me the best.—The unbelieving Jews, it is certain, would not hear of the death of the Messiah; and used to urge the absurdity of it to the Gentiles. St. Paul, in this very epistle, dwells upon the necessity of it (ii. 13. 14. 15. 16.); and here having produced a text of scripture for another purpose, he just, by the way, applies it to that argument.

13. 14. 15. 16. I have in these verses, agreeably to the method I follow, just given the scope and connection of what appears to me the apostle's argument; but I cannot pass by, without remark, that beautiful and pleasing comparison which he makes between the growth of a Christian, and the natural growth of the human body. "*We are no more children, the sport of passions, and prey of designing men: but we grow up in Him, from whom the whole body is joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplies, making increase, according to the effectual working of every part; till we come, in the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man—unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*"

24. St. Paul often speaks of the redemption of man through Christ, as producing a new creation. ΚΤΙΣΤΑ is here used in that sense. Again, in 2 Cor. v. 17. *καὶν κτίσις* has the same meaning. Again in Gal. vi. 15. and in other places.

you

you would throw off your old habits, and become new men. All grosser sins against your neighbour ^{25.26.27.}
—falsehood—steal—excessive anger—corrupt con- ^{28.29.30.}
versation—malice—and bitterness of every kind, are, I hope, among the first heathen vices you relinquish. Be gentle, therefore, and merciful, and kind ^{31.32.}
to each other; imitating that Saviour who died to redeem you, and that God who hath forgiven your sins.

CHAP.
V.

Let all impurity, likewise, be avoided, as well as sins against your neighbour. The philosopher ^{1.2.3.4.5.}
of this world may excuse impure practices, under ^{6.7.}
the name of natural inclinations. But assure yourselves they are utterly inconsistent with the kingdom of Christ. Suffer not yourselves again, therefore, ^{8.}
to be involved in that darkness from which you have been delivered. You have now a glorious light to direct you. But if it does not shew you ^{9.}
that all Gentile impurities are entirely opposite to the spirit of the gospel, you are yet in darkness. Nothing but a direct opposition to these can make ^{10.}
you acceptable to God. Abhor, therefore, all such ^{11.12.13.}
impurities, ^{14.}

2. By *πλεονεξία*, in this verse, inordinate desires seem to be meant. See Dr. Hammond on this place, and Parkhurst's Lexicon.—So in the 5th verse, the word *covetous* should be an *unclean person*. As lewdness and idolatry were so much practised together by the heathen, they are often brought together by the apostle.

12. The apostle is here probably alluding to the mysteries of the heathen; their *απορρητα*: and some have observed a sarcasm in

impurities, which it offends decency even to mention : and consider yourselves as called by the great prophetic voice, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

15.16.17. Leave, therefore, the folly of this world to its children ; and accommodate yourselves to the wisdom of the next. Too much of your time hath already been spent in sin : be the more earnest to

18.19.20. improve what is left. Let the heathen have recourse to riot and intemperance in their joys : let yours spring from a purer source—gratitude and thankfulness to God ; that true melody of the heart, which nothing earthly can raise.

21. Let forbearance, humility, and a general submission of your inclinations and humours to each other, reign among you.

what he says. He calls them things *not to be spoken of*—but not because they were too *sacred*, but too *infamous*.

14. It is probable the apostle alludes to several passages in the prophet Isaiah, which bear this sense ; though none of them exactly in these words. The passage most similar is chap. xxvi. 19. But the apostolic writers often quote from memory, and observe the sense rather than the words.

16. Almost all interpreters consider this verse (*redeeming the time, because the days are evil*) as a lesson of worldly prudence, Persecution will arise against you, therefore act discreetly. But I own I cannot see any connection between this sense and the context.—Besides, it seems to be an unnecessary lesson. The converts, to whom this advice is directed, were so far from discovering too intemperate a zeal for religion, that the apostle found it necessary to caution them even against Jewish rites and heathen abominations.

18. 19. Many interpreters suppose the apostle is here alluding to the Bacchanalian orgies ; and that he prescribed psalms and hymns, instead of the wild and frantic songs which were sung in those processions.

Let

Let the married state be observed with all sanctity; and be considered as an emblem of the sacred union between Christ and his church—of that love and tenderness which flow from one; and of that submission and respect which are due from the other †.

Let the duties of children and parents be mutually observed. If the former are taught obedience, let the latter lay a foundation for it in gentleness and religious instruction.

Let the servant obey his master, not on any worldly principle; but under a sense of his duty to God, from whom he expects his recompence.— On the other hand, let not the master think himself free from obligation: but let him behave, on all occasions, with humanity to his servant; considering that he also has a Master in heaven, who is no respecter of persons.

CHAP.
VI.

1. 2. 3. 4.

5. 6. 7. 8.

9.

† The apostle dilates somewhat more on this allusion. Two things seems evidently to have struck his attention. He seems at first to have had nothing in view but to exhort men to *love their wives as Christ loved the church*: but being struck with this latter idea, which contains the greater truth of the two, he carries on the similitude farther than he at first seems to have intended.

2. If this be the *first commandment with promise*, says the Popish casuist, then it is plain the second commandment of the decalogue, in which there is a promise likewise, should be abrogated.—May we not, with rather less violence, suppose the apostle means here, a *particular, or special* promise? The declaration in the second commandment, that *God will shew mercy to thousands that love him, and keep his commandments*, is not specific, but expressed in general terms. It relates to *all* the commands of God in general.

9. *Forbearing threatening*—that is, forbearing that domineering, haughty language, which is so contrary to the spirit of the gospel.

To

10. To conclude, my brethren, exert strenuously those
endeavours, which will be farther aided by the di-
11. 12. vine grace. You have not only the opposition of
wicked men to combat ; but must expect, also, the
13. opposition of wicked spirits. Put on, therefore, that
divine armour which the gospel hath provided. It
14. will serve you in every exigence. Let truth, honesty,
15. and sincerity, surround you like a military belt. Let
a good conscience be your breast-plate ; and a peace-
able disposition, like greaves, defend your steps.
16. But let the shield of faith—a firm belief in the
truths of religion—be your great security against
17. every attack. Crown all with the helmet of salva-
tion—the hope of everlasting life : and for your of-
18. fensive arms, take the word of God, which is the
sword of the Spirit.—In using these divine arms,
add constant prayer to God for yourselves and
19. 20. others. And forget not me your apostle in your
prayers ; who am suffering imprisonment for your
sake, that I may plead the cause of the gospel boldly
as I ought.

16. *Quench all the fiery darts.* The apostle alludes to missile weapons, often used, with burning flax wrapped about them.

18. Bp. Wilkins in his *Treatise on Prayer*, p. 39, explains the expression, *watching thereunto with all perseverance*, &c. as an instruction to take every opportunity of reading, meditation, company, &c. to gather up constantly proper materials for prayer : which is an *excellent lesson* to a Christian, whatever may become of the *interpretation*.

19. *That utterance may be given me ;* see a note on 2 Cor. xii. 7, and Gal. iv. 13.

With regard to all particulars relating to myself, 21. 22.
I refer you to Tychicus, a faithful minister of Christ,
who brings you this epistle, and will answer all your
questions.

Peace and love be among you all; and the grace 23. 24.]
of God upon all his faithful servants!

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE
EPHESIANS.

2494

P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THIS epistle was written from Rome, about the time, as is generally supposed, when St. Paul was set at liberty. It was sent by Epaphroditus, by whom the apostle had received a contribution from his friends at Philippi.—He begins, after a salutation full of tenderness and kindness, to satisfy their questions about his present situation at Rome. He assures them of his perfect resignation—speaks of his deliverance as a matter of great uncertainty; but rather believes that it is God's good pleasure it should take place. He then exhorts them to purity of life—cautions them against Jewish zealots—and kindly accepts the supply they had sent him.

EPISTLE

TO THE

PHILIPPIANS.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

PAUL and Timothy, ministers of Christ, to the bishops, deacons, and whole Christian church at Philippi; grace and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Your advancement in the gospel, from your first 3. 4. 5. 6. conversion till this time, is the constant subject of my thankfulness to God; who will, I doubt not, preserve you steady in that faith which you have embraced, till the great day of Christ. I have every 7. reason to hope this of you, as, through the grace of God, you have been partakers with me in defending and confirming the gospel; and have kindly administered to me in all those necessities which I have suffered for its sake. God knows the love I bear 8. you; and the earnest prayers I make, that you may 9. increase in all Christian love and knowledge; and 10. 11. that being fully convinced of the excellence of that holy

holy faith which you have embraced, you may abound more and more in the fruits it produces, to the glory of God; and be found innocent and sincere members of the church of Christ, in the day of his glorious appearance.

12. Let me now answer your inquiries, by assuring you, that whatever hath happened to me, hath had
 13. a tendency to advance the gospel. The occasion of my being sent here a prisoner is now well known,
 14. even in the emperor's court; and hath excited the zeal of many to stand forth in the defence of our holy religion. I wish I could speak as favourably
 15. 16. 17. of all. But while there are many sincere preachers of God's word, who consider me as a suffering minister in his cause; I must add, there are others who preach in opposition to me; mixing Jewish ceremonies with the gospel; and are not withheld by knowing the distress they give me.—
 18. *Some* good effect may, however, arise from such preaching; and so far, it will always be matter of joy to me.
 19. 20. As to my present sufferings, I have no doubt but I shall always have reason to consider them, through your prayers and the direction of the Holy Spirit, as the means of my happiness. I hope, also, that I

15. The apostle does not express whom he meant by these opposers. But it is generally supposed he meant the Jewish converts. The words *ex αἵματι*, in the sixteenth verse, seem to imply some *impure mixture*; and Judaism was the principal mixture that prevailed at that time. In other parts of the epistle also the apostle seems to have allusion to the Jews. See particularly the beginning of chap. iii.

shall persevere with such firmness, that the gospel of Christ shall be advanced either by my life or death. If I live, I live in Christ: if I die, I die in hope 21. of everlasting mercy; and of setting the seal of martyrdom to the truth of the gospel. Suffering, it is true, awaits me here: yet still my choice is divided. To be removed to Christ is my secret wish: but it may be more advantageous to the churches I have planted, to continue longer upon earth. And, indeed, 25. I have persuasion that this is God's destination; and 26. that I shall fulfil that joy which you express in the hope of seeing me again.

In the mean time, let your lives be such as become 27. the gospel of Christ; that whether I see you, or hear of you only in my absence, I may find, you live in happy unity together; and have emulation in nothing, but in paying obedience to the precepts of the gospel.—Let neither worldly fears nor worldly 28. adversaries discompose you. The opposition of your enemies marks their hard and impenitent hearts; but brightens your hopes in the mercies of God; 29. 30. purifying your religious principles, as, I hope in God, it hath done mine, by adding suffering to faith.

CHAP.

II.

If, therefore, you have any consolation in Christ— 1. 2. any comfort in love—any joy in the Holy Spirit, and in the mercies of God—complete my hopes in you, by continuing in the exercise of Christian charity. Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory; 3.

21. If the original be pointed with a comma after *Χριστός*, the sense will be, *For Christ to me, both in life and death, is gain.*

4. but in humility of mind, let each esteem his neighbour better than himself; and in every thing consider his neighbour's interest as his own. Let each
 5.6.7.8.9. of you imitate the example of your blessed Saviour,
 10. 11. who took upon himself the lowly form of man, and suffered death upon the cross, though he was before equal with God; and was afterwards to be exalted
 12. to the highest state of glory. While you were under my eye, your religious conduct was ever pleasing to me: let it be equally so in my absence. Conform your actions with caution and godly fear, to the
 13. precepts of the gospel; being assured that it is through

5. I give what appears to me to be the *primary and argumentative* purport of these verses; which was to recommend *humility* and *charity* by the example of Christ. The difficulties they contain I have not entered into; hardly any two commentators agreeing in the same precise meaning. The expression, *ὃς ἀπαύλας ἡγήσατο τὸ ἴσθαι ὡς θεός*, *he thought it not robbery to be equal to God*, is generally explained, as if he did not covet or desire to appear on earth in the divine glory. See Whitby and Pyle.—The expression, *God hath highly exalted him*, is supposed to refer to the exaltation of Christ's *human nature*—his *divine nature* being in the *form of God*.—But perhaps there is no great wisdom in examining too deeply into these high points, which must for ever be above us. *Nescire velle, quæ magister optimus nescire nos vult, erudita inscitia est.*—See this subject discussed in the three first sermons of vol. iv. of Sherlocke's Sermons.

13. It seems to be the constant doctrine of scripture, (expressed in this verse among other passages,) that the Spirit of God, in a manner, makes a part of us, and is disposed to act uniformly upon all mankind, who use the means prescribed in scripture to obtain this powerful aid, among which fervent prayer is the chief.—How far God may favour his faithful servants in their *exigences* with *particular aids*, we know not. In *general*, however, it seems to be the language rather of enthusiasm, than of reason and scripture, that the Holy Spirit of God assists us by partial, desultory illapses. But as we are told, that *without God we can do no good thing*, it seems probable that the Spirit of God is never entirely quenched in the breasts even of the worst of men. If it were,

through your own fault only, if God's Holy Spirit
 ever fail to assist your endeavours. Be particularly 14.
 careful to suffer no harshness nor animosity of any
 kind to enter into your disputes—that your adversaries 15.
 may throw as little imputation as possible upon you
 —and that you may at least be considered as blame-
 less and irreproachable among those who will always
 be ready to take hold of every thing in their power ;
 in the midst of whom, I wish you to shine as lights 16.
 in the world ; so that having passed your Christian
 pilgrimage on earth, I may rejoice in the day of
 Christ, at the success of my ministry among you.
 Nay, if I should even now be offered up as a sacri- 17. 18.
 fice for my labours in the gospel, I, as well as you,
 ought to make it matter of joy.

I trust in Christ, that I shall soon be able to send 19.
 Timothy to Philippi, through whom I shall obtain 20.
 some certain intelligence of you. I have no one here 21.
 on whom I can equally depend. I see among all too 22.
 much attachment to themselves, and too little to the
 gospel. But he, with the affection of a child, hath 23. 24.

were, they could never repent.—We are told in the text, to
work out our salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that
worketh in us. The reason is plain, lest by *not working for ourselves,*
 we should lose the assistance of God, which will decay, more and
 more, as we neglect the gracious admonitions of the Holy Spirit.

—As to the phrase, that *God worketh in us to will, and to do of*
his good pleasure, it appears, from the whole sense of the passage,
 that he does not act in an arbitrary manner, (for then it would be
 absurd for us to work ourselves,) but only, that it is his good plea-
 sure that he works for us at all.

15. *Shine as lights.* The word *φωσος*, retained *light*, I believe,
 is commonly used to express that kind of light which is intended to
 direct mariners.

been dutifully attentive to me, as you have often had opportunity to observe. I shall wait, however, to see what will be the event of my trial here ; and if I cannot come myself, I shall send him.

25. In the mean time, I thought it proper to send back to you your messenger, Epaphroditus, with this letter, who has delivered your supplies safely to me ; and whom I consider as my fellow-labourer, and a minister to me from you. He has been greatly distressed at finding you had heard of his sickness.
26. He hath indeed been so ill, that his life was despaired of : but it hath pleased God to restore him, which I consider as an act of mercy to me, as well as to him.
27. I send him, therefore, the more speedily, that you may not wait long in suspense ; and that I may also rejoice the sooner in your joy at seeing him. I need not exhort you to receive him kindly ; and to treat him, and all such pastors, with respect. He hath hazarded his life for Christ's sake, in the execution of your kind commission to assist me.

CHAP.

III.

1. 2. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. — And yet, before I conclude, let me exhort you again, as

27. From circumstances of this kind, we see the apostles had not always inherent in them the power of healing the sick : otherwise it might be supposed, that Paul would have healed this useful minister of the church.

28. *Σπεδαστικῶς*, is rendered better by *hastily* or *speedily*, than *carefully*.

1. It seems as if the apostle had intended to conclude his epistle here. His saying, he proposed to send away Epaphroditus *σπεδαστικῶς*, seems to imply it. But the idea of the Jewish zealots intervening, carries him farther into length.

it

it may make a stronger impression, not to suffer
 yourselves to be misled by those Jewish zealots,
 who would enforce circumcision, as necessary to sal-
 vation : but to consider the church of Christ as the 3.
 true church of God ; which, instead of placing any
 confidence in outward ceremonies, trusts in Jesus
 Christ alone, and worships God in truth. No man 4.
 surely can have more reason to trust in Jewish pri-
 vileges than I have. I was born, initiated, and edu- 5.
 cated in the Jewish church, with every circumstance
 of exactness. I afterwards embraced one of its 6.
 strictest sects ; and opposing all its adversaries, was
 a most rigid observer of its whole ritual. But these 7.
 things, on which I once so greatly valued myself,
 I now totally reject, for the sake of the gospel.
 Every thing I consider as trifling in the comparison. 8.
 All I had in the world I gave up for Christ ; giving 9.
 up, also, every idea of acceptance through the Mo-
 saic law ; trusting solely in the promises of the gos- 10.
 pel—acknowledging the amazing truth of Christ's
 resurrection—and following his blessed steps, that I 11.
 might, through him, rise again to a glorious immor-
 tality. The prize is set before me. I have not yet 12.13.14.
 attained it. I am not yet perfected. But I keep
 my eye fixed on the great end. I forget every thing
 behind ; and looking steadily at the point before me,

8. *Suffered the loss of all things.* The original word respects chiefly that kind of loss which mariners suffer when they throw their goods into the sea to save their lives.

I press towards the mark—that glorious mark of eternal life which the gospel presents.

15. Let me exhort you all, therefore, to adhere firmly to this truth—that salvation depends only on the gospel. But if any have not yet gotten entirely over his Jewish scruples, let him not be discouraged:
16. God will, by degrees, remove them. Let those, in the mean time, whose faith is purer, continue
17. steadily in it; following the example which we
18. and their other pastors have set them. Thus, while they who are enemies of the cross of Christ, (whom I have often, with great distress, mentioned to you,)
19. spend their lives in worldly gratifications, to which they are totally given up; let us have our conver-
20. sation in heaven; expecting that great day, when
21. these vile bodies shall take a glorious form; and;
- CHAP. IV. through the power of God, be totally rendered sub-
- servient to him.—Let this consideration weigh
1. with you, to continue firm in the faith you have pro-
2. fessed. To Euodias and Syntyche in particular, I
3. direct this exhortation. I beseech, also, my worthy colleague, together with Clement, and others my

2. These two women might probably live in Jewish families, or their relations might be judaizing Christians; or they might be connected with heathen families.

3. It is not well known whom the apostle means by the phrase *true yoke fellows*. To say he means his wife, as some have said, is absurd, as he himself tells us he was unmarried.—*Whose names are in the book of life*. We need not suppose that St. Paul literally means these persons to be beyond a possibility of falling; but only that their present behaviour was such as was acceptable to God, and would ensure their salvation if they persevered in it.

faithful

faithful fellow-labourers in the gospel, to assist these women, who have shewn such piety in their services to us.

I now again conclude, exhorting you to rejoice in the Lord, under all your distresses. Let your moderation be evident to all. Every controversy will soon be carried from an earthly to a heavenly tribunal. Be not, therefore, anxious about worldly affairs; but lay all your requests before God, never omitting thanksgiving for past mercies. Thus the peace of God, which can be felt only, not described, shall keep both your affections and your understanding in a blessed composure through Christ! For the sake of all those virtues which adorn the Christian profession, think deeply of these things; and let me have the happiness of hoping that both my precepts and example have tended to impress them upon you.

Your kind care in administering to my necessities, (which, I well know, would have exerted itself sooner, if an earlier opportunity had fallen out,) hath afforded me great matter of religious joy. I value it more as an instance of your affection, than as a supply of my own wants. As to myself, I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. Through Christ, that strengthens me, I am prepared for every adversity. But still your kindness is very pleasing to

4. See chap. iii. 1, and the note.—The sense would be stronger, if the pause in the original were placed after *κρίνω*. It would then be, *Rejoice in the Lord: I say always rejoice.*

- me, as it was also at Thessalonica : for since I left Macedonia, I have received no assistance from any
17. church but yours. Yet I value it, as I said, not so much because it afforded a supply to my wants ; as because it was a grateful instance of your love.
18. Assure yourselves, that what you have sent by Epaphroditus, is sufficient for all my necessities : and
19. what is more, a sacrifice acceptable to God ; from whom you are to look for your return in the mercies of the gospel ; and to whom, for all his tender care to us, be attributed all glory and honour, for ever and ever, Amen !
21. 22. Salute all the brethren who are with you ; and receive the salutation of all here, particularly of our brethren in Cæsar's court.
23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen !

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE
PHILIPPIANS.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

THIS epistle is generally supposed to have been written a little before the apostle's release from his imprisonment at Rome; and it appears to have been sent at the same time with the epistle to Philemon. — Mr. Paley supposes, it was written about the time when the epistle to the Ephesians was written; and founds his opinion on a variety of expressions, which are nearly the same in both epistles. The same train of ideas, he ingeniously supposes, was still in the writer's mind. See *Hor. Paul.* p. 208.

St. Paul first expresses his joy at the favourable accounts he had received of the perseverance and piety of the Colossian church. He then enlarges upon the mercies of redemption—and cautions his converts against deceivers—against judaizing principles—and other species of false doctrine. He draws a picture of Christians acting uniformly under the influence of the gospel, both in their public and private capacities; and concludes with general instructions and salutations.

EPISTLE

TO THE

COLOSSIANS.

CHAP.
I.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the appointment of God, (together with Timothy,) to the Christian church at Colosse; grace and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Ever since I heard of your faith in Christ, and of that love which it produced among you, I have given thanks to God, and have offered up my constant prayers for your advancement in all holiness. You have now attained that heavenly hope in the gospel, which hath wrought in you, as it hath in others who have embraced it, the fruits of righteousness. You have obligations, also, to our beloved Epaphras, who hath been a faithful minister among you; and hath made me happy, by informing me of those pious affections, which, on all occasions, you discover. It is the constant subject, therefore, of my prayers to God, that you may abound more and

1. 2.

3. 4.

5. 6.

7.

8.

9. 10.

11. and more in all Christian knowledge—and in the virtues of a holy life: that, being strengthened by the hand of God, you may be enabled to bear with patience the trials of the world.
12. 13. 14. In every thing, therefore, give thanks to God; but particularly for his having delivered you from heathen darkness—for your redemption through Christ—the forgiveness of your sins—and the prospect before you of everlasting happiness.
15. Consider, then, with reverence the great work of your redemption—*who* hath performed it; and *what* hath been performed.—The author of this great work is no less than the Son of God, the image of the invisible Father, existing before all creation.
16. 17. By him all things in heaven and earth were created;
18. and through him they are preserved. It is this great Saviour who is the head of the Christian church; and who, by his resurrection from the dead, hath
19. shewn his power over death; thus giving us the assurance of immortality. For it hath pleased God
20. to invest him with full power; and to accept his death on the cross, as the means of reconciling to himself all created beings, both in heaven and on
21. 22. earth.—Of this blessed society you now make a part. Though once alienated from God by your wickedness, you are now reconciled to him in purity
23. and holiness, through the death of Christ; if you

15. Erasmus and other commentators do not translate *πρωτογενος*—the first-born, but the first producer.

steadily persevere in that faith which you have received, and in that hope which hath been set before you.

For myself, who am graciously appointed by God 24.
 the minister of the gospel, I can truly say, I rejoice
 in the sufferings which I undergo for its sake; and
 in completing those prophecies, which foretold that
 the servants of Christ should suffer after his death.
 My commission, indeed, reaches chiefly to you, the 25. 26.
 Gentile part of that church, to whom I open the re-
 demption of the world by Christ—a mystery hitherto
 kept secret from mankind; but now revealed to all,
 both Jews and Gentiles; to whom God is pleased 27:
 to make known his gracious intention of offering
 salvation to all, through Jesus Christ. This holy gos- 28.
 pel I have preached; warning the disobedient not to
 reject so kind an offer—instructing the pious in that
 heavenly wisdom, which will lead them to everlasting 29.
 life—and exercising among you those spiritual gifts,
 with which God for this purpose hath endowed me. CHAP.
 —For you, and the church of Laodicea, and all, II.
 among whom I have not personally preached the gos- 1.
 pel, I am under particular anxiety: wishing you all 2.
 spiritual comfort, from the exercise of kind affections
 among yourselves—from a perfect knowledge of the
 religion you have embraced—and from a liberty to 3.
 profess openly the name of Christ; in whom the di-
 vine power and knowledge equally reside.

24. This is the interpretation which Dr. Clarke gives of this verse. See his Sermons, vol. i. p. 274.

4. Take care, therefore, lest you be seduced by artful
 5. and worldly men. For though I am absent from you,
 my heart is continually with you; and I have a con-
 6. 7. stant eye over your faith and manners. Persevere
 in your profession. Trust only in Christ for all
 your hopes of pardon and future happiness; with
 all thankfulness receiving the inestimable blessing
 8. which God hath vouchsafed unto you. In a particu-
 lar manner, let me warn you against the reasonings
 and philosophy of men, which will only lead you
 into vain and unprofitable disquisitions: and let me
 9. exhort you to rest in that Holy Saviour, of whose
 divinity you are fully assured, though he was revealed
 10. humbly in the flesh. In him, the Author of all
 11. 12. heavenly grace, you are complete. The blessings of
 his church are conferred upon you, through faith
 and repentance. As circumcision was the sign of
 God's covenant with the Jews; so is baptism with
 you. By this rite, you are buried, as it were, with
 Christ; and raised again, in allusion to his resurrec-
 13. tion. For under the gospel, you are considered as
 14. having been dead in sin; but raised to life through
 Christ, who forgives your sin—supercedes those rites
 and ceremonies, by which the Jews held their claim
 15. to God's peculiar favour—and having vanquished

12. The mode of administering baptism by immersion, as was formerly practised, is here alluded to.

15. This, in the opinion of many judicious interpreters, refers to the abridged power of the devil, after Christianity was established, agreeably to what our Saviour himself says, *I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven.* Luke x. 18.

the power of Satan, hath triumphed openly over him. Pay no attention, therefore, to those who maintain the necessity of Jewish observances. The Mosaic ceremonies were mere shadows and types of Christ. — Neither be deceived by an affectation of humility, in the adoration of angels; which arises from the arrogance of human reason, intruding into subjects beyond its reach, without resting on any authority; and giving up the intercession of Christ — the only real intercession, through which we are taught to approach the Father. Through him, the whole body of Christians are united, as under one head; and from him they receive all their supply of spiritual nourishment. — If, then, you are to consider yourselves as dead to the world through Christ; why, as if living in the world, should you still be

16. The *sabbaths* here mentioned are not the seventh-day sabbaths, but Jewish festivals.

18. Making intercession through angels, under the pretence of not daring to apply directly to God, was a heresy (derived in part perhaps from the Platonic philosophers) which obtained early in the Christian churches of Greece. About the third century a canon was made at Laodicea against those who maintained this doctrine, under the name of *Angelici*. But though this sect was later in the church than the times of the apostles, yet it is not improbable, that among the heathen nations the worship of angels, after they became Christians, might have taken place of the worship they formerly paid to the *Dii inferiores*. — It would be somewhat surprising after this, that the papists should broach anew an old discarded error, and hold it with such inflexible obstinacy, if the history of mankind did not shew in numberless other instances, that tenacity in the minds of men, especially when united in society, with which they persevere in holding errors they have once adopted; though one should suppose, that in their own minds they cannot but condemn them.

20. Here the apostle seems to draw his conclusion from what he had said in the 12th and 13th verses.

subject to these carnal ordinances, with regard to meats and other things, which are now entirely abrogated, and depend on the mere authority of man? Why should you pay any attention to those other extravagances I have just mentioned, with regard

CHAP. to angel-worship? All these things, whatever specious

III. pretences they may hold out, are certainly both dis-

1. 2. honourable to God, and unsatisfactory to man.

Through Christ's resurrection you are raised to the hope of eternal life. The great conclusion therefore

is, that you should set your affections on *heavenly*,

3. 4. not on *earthly* things. In this world you are dead: you must consider your life as laid up with Christ, in his blessed keeping, till the great day shall restore it to everlasting happiness.

5. Under a sense, then, of these high expectations,

6. purify all those gross affections and appetites which have ever drawn the wrath of God upon mankind;

7. and which you indulged, like other heathen, before

8. your conversion. Divest your minds also of wrath

9. and malice—your conversation of railing, lewdness, and falsehood: always remembering, that you are

10. 11. now to consider your nature as totally changed. All

23. In explaining this verse, I confess I have been chiefly led by the sound of the words; for, I own, I cannot understand the sense by the help of any commentator I have seen. The best interpreter, I think, is Whitby; who produces long quotations from Josephus, Philo, and other writers, to shew that the apostle alludes to the opinions and practices of the Essenes. See also Dr. Prideaux on this subject, part ii. b. v. p. 365.

3. It is a beautiful image to consider our lives as treasures, locked up with Christ in heaven.

your

your old habits must be laid aside ; and habits entirely new taken up, after the example of your blessed Saviour ; in whom all distinctions are now lost, which country, education, or condition of life, makes among men.

Consider yourselves, therefore, in the light of God's
 12. holy servants ; and instead of those worldly lusts and
 passions which your profession forbids, clothe your-
 selves with affection to each other ; with humility,
 13. meekness, gentleness, and forbearance ; forgiving each
 other ; and remembering the many sins which Christ
 hath forgiven you. Let Christian charity, which is
 14. the bond of all virtues, as uniting them together,
 be the principal badge of your profession. Let the
 15. peace of God rule in your hearts, and influence you,
 as one body, in performing acts of gratitude and
 praise. Let the doctrines of the gospel be the leading
 16. principles of your hearts. Let them inspire your
common intercourse with holy conversation—your *pub-*
lic meetings with spiritual hymns. Let them regu-
 17. late your words and actions ; and make your whole
 lives one course of joy and thankfulness to God
 through Christ.

In the mean time, let not your *private* affections
 18. be lost in *general* notions of Christian charity. Let
 the wife pay a proper submission to her husband—
 and the husband a due regard to his wife. Let chil-
 19. dren obey their parents, as God hath enjoined : and
 20. 21. let parents treat their children with that kindness

22. 23. which may secure their affection. Let the servant obey his master, not on mere worldly principles ;
24. but in obedience to God, from whom he must expect the reward of his services. Let him consider himself
25. as the servant of Christ ; who has the same regard
- CHAP. for him as for his master ; to whom, as well as to
IV. his master, he is certainly accountable for his wrong
1. behaviour. Let the master, also, treat the servant with justice and kindness ; remembering always that he too has a Master in heaven.
2. Let me conclude with exhorting you earnestly to
3. 4. constant and fervent prayer ; never forgetting to add *thanksgiving* to your *petitions*. And in your prayers let me be remembered—*that*, although I am now a prisoner for the gospel, I may still be permitted to open it to mankind, in what manner God thinks best.
5. Act prudently in your intercourse towards those who profess not the gospel ; redeeming the time which you yourselves have lost, when you were un-
6. believers. Be as discreet, also, in your words, as in your actions. Let every thing you say, be said in the spirit of the gospel ; whether you answer your private adversary, or give your testimony in public.

22. The servants St. Paul here means were slaves, many of whom had embraced Christianity. Whether those converts had any idea that a conversion to Christianity was a manumission, or whether the apostle had compassion on their station, he often dwells on topics of advice and comfort to them.

With

With Onesimus, who is now become a faithful 7. 8. 9.
brother, I send Tychicus; from whom you may
receive every information with regard to me; and
through whom I hope to have a pleasing return of
information from you.

Aristarchus, Mark the nephew of Barnabas, (whom 10. 11.
I before recommended to you,) and Justus, send
their salutations. Of all the Jews now in Rome,
these three only have been of assistance to me in the
gospel.

Of the Gentile Christians, Luke the physician, 12. 13. 14.
Demas, and Epaphras, join in the same salutation
—Epaphras, in particular, your worthy minister;
in whose prayers you are always remembered; and
whose zeal for you, and the churches in your neigh-
bourhood, is unbounded.

Salute in our names all the brethren at Laodicea; 15.
particularly Nymphas, and the church in his house.
Let this epistle be read to the church of Laodicea; 16.
and do you read the epistle from thence: and warn 17.

9. This Onesimus is supposed to be Philemon's slave, whom St. Paul converted. See his epistle to Philemon.

14. Demas, on some worldly account, left the apostle. See 2 Tim. iv. 10. But it depends on the dates of this epistle, and of the second to Timothy, whether he left the apostle before he is here mentioned, or after.

16. What epistle from Laodicea this was, is not known. It was probably some epistle which that church wrote to the apostle on subjects which he thought might be useful among the Colossian Christians; and therefore he returned it with his own to Colosse.—Others think that the epistle to the Ephesians was a kind of circular epistle, of which the church of Laodicea had a copy.

Archippus to pay great attention to the ministry he has received.

18. With my kind remembrance of you all, I sign this epistle with my own hand. Forget not my sufferings in the gospel. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all; Amen!

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE
COLOSSIANS.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

TWO EPISTLES to the THESSALONIANS.

THESE two epistles are supposed to have been written from Corinth; and Dr. Lardner imagines they were the first which St. Paul wrote. I think this rather unlikely from the conclusion of the latter: *The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand; which is the token in every epistle.* —But it is a matter of little moment.

In the former of these epistles, the apostle expresses himself much pleased with the behaviour of his new converts. He exhorts them to continue steadily in their profession, by dwelling on the opposition and difficulties he had met with in converting them—and on the disinterested affection he had always shewn them. He warns them against those heathen impurities which they had so lately relinquished. He inculcates brotherly love; and settles some points with regard to the resurrection; on which subject, several erroneous opinions had obtained. Lastly, he exhorts them to vigilance and perseverance; and concludes with general instructions.

In the second epistle, he encourages his converts still farther in steadiness and perseverance ; takes up the argument again with regard to the false opinions which prevailed about the resurrection ; and concludes with advising them to give no colour to an objection commonly made against Christians, from their being disposed to idleness.

FIRST EPISTLE

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

CHAP.
I.

PAUL, Silas, and Timothy, to the Christian church established at Thessalonica, grace and peace, through God and Christ!

It is not without sincere thanksgiving to God, that we remember your faith and charity; your patience and hope in that holy religion into which you have been called—a religion, which has not only been preached to you; but proved by the gift of the Holy Ghost, and by the miracles which we were enabled to work among you. Impressed by these things, you embraced it steadily; and were able to bear the afflictions it brought upon you, through the inward joys which it produced: insomuch that you became examples to all the faithful in Macedonia and Achaia: and not there only, but in all other places, your faith is spoken of; and that ready zeal acknowledged, with which you received the

T 4

messengers

10. messengers of truth; turning from idols, to embrace the only true God; and expecting the gracious promises of the gospel, on the foundation of Christ's resurrection from the dead.

CHAP.

II.

1. 2. What difficulties attended our first labours among you, you well know; and how zealously we preached the gospel, notwithstanding the violent opposition and ill-usage we met with at Philippi. You are witnesses, also, with what purity and guileless sincerity we exhorted you to continue in the faith. In this great work which is entrusted to us, we have acted as men who are accountable to that God who knoweth the heart. We never adapted our doctrine to any indirect views either of ourselves or of others: 6. 7. we sought neither praise nor profit. No burden of any kind laid we upon you: but treated you, on all 8. occasions, with parental tenderness; and were ready, if it had been the will of God, to have given our 9. lives for your sake. You well remember how laboriously we earned our daily bread among you, that our preaching might be free from every interested 10. 11. appearance. To you we appeal—to God also—how 12. unblameably and justly we lived among you; exhorting you, with a father's gentleness, to live in steady obedience to that holy religion which you had embraced.

2. See Acts xvi. where St. Paul is ill-treated at Philippi; and afterwards goes (Acts xvii. 1.) to Thessalonica, as he here tells them.

Nor were our endeavours fruitless. We thank 13.
 God, that you received the gospel, not as a human
 institution; but as a gift from heaven; imitating the 14.
 example of the earliest churches in Christ, which
 were established in Judea. Like them, also, you were
 persecuted by your own brethren. After the Jews 15.
 had killed their own prophets, and put to death the
 Lord Jesus, we had nothing to expect from them
 but the extremity of persecution. And we received
 it in full measure—partly, indeed, on your account;
 for one of the great causes of their malice to us, was 16.
 our preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.—But the
 measure of their iniquity is now full.

In these and all your persecutions, I would I were 17.
 able to comfort you by my presence, as well as by
 my epistle. It was my intention, indeed, more than 18.
 once, to have visited you: but I have been detained
 here by ill-disposed persons. My affections are al- 19. 20.
 ways with you: for nothing is to me a matter of
 such joy, as the hope of presenting you holy before
 God, in the great day.

CHAP.
III.

This strong affection impelling me, I continued }
 at Athens alone, and sent Timothy to you, to esta- 1. 2. 3.
 blish your faith; and to encourage you to undergo,
 with Christian fortitude, those persecutions for the
 cross of Christ, which, you are well informed, we
 must all prepare ourselves to suffer. So early as 4.

16. The end of this verse relates to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem.

18. Satan is often put for an adversary or opposer. *Get thee behind me, Satan.*

- when I was last with you, I assured you of this, and
5. we have now experienced it. I feared lest these trials
of your faith might have been too severe for you ;
and, in my tenderness, I could not forbear sending
6. 7. Timothy to inquire after your situation. His return,
with the joyful account of your faith and charity,
and affectionate remembrance of me, hath dispelled
all my fears ; and given me joy in the midst of my
8. distresses. I feel myself revived by your steadiness ;
9. and I give thanks to God for the joyful accounts I
10. have heard of you ; praying, night and day, that I
may be permitted to see you, and make up every
11. 12. deficiency in your faith. May the Lord God and
our Saviour Christ direct my way unto you ! and
make you increase more and more in kindness and
13. love ; that you may have holy confidence in that day,
when our blessed Lord shall appear in glory !

CHAP.
IV.

1. 2. 3. Let me, then, beseech you, my brethren, and ear-
nestly exhort you to observe strictly that rule of
duty which you have received. You remember the
injunctions we laid upon you against those vices
which are practised in Gentile countries—against for-
4. 5. nication in particular. A much purer life will be
expected from you than from the ignorant heathen.
You know that these impurities cannot be practised

1. See an account of this transaction in Acts xvii. 15. These occasional references of one part of scripture to another, certainly add to the arguments for its authenticity.

4. Bowyer conjectures, that σκευὴ should be written σκηνή, *his tabernacle*—that is, his body.

without injury to others as well as yourselves. You 6.
 know also, as we have often warned you, that they 7.
 will draw the judgment of God upon you. God 8.
 hath called the Christian to purity of life. The im-
 pure Christian, therefore, not only despises the law
 of man, but the law of God also, and the impulse of
 his Holy Spirit.

With regard to brotherly love, I need not say any 9.
 thing to you. Your own hearts inform you, that this
 duty is impressed upon you by a greater teacher than
 I am, even by God himself. And indeed I have nothing
 to charge you with on this head : I shall only exhort 10.
 you, that in this and all other Christian virtues, you
 may increase more and more.

I could wish you also to intermeddle as little as pos- 11. 12.
 sible with the affairs of the heathen people among
 whom you live. Follow industriously your own call-
 ings, and shew your Gentile neighbours that you mean
 not to be a useless burden upon them.

With regard to your deceased brethren, I hope 13.
 your Christian faith will keep your sorrow within
 bounds. If you believe the resurrection of Christ, 14.
 you cannot doubt of theirs : and whether we be 15. 16. 17.
 alive 18.

6. The phrases to go beyond and defraud, have reference, ac-
 cording to the best commentators, to the impurities mentioned be-
 fore. Impurities of this kind certainly involve others in guilt as
 well as ourselves—*In any matter*, may be better translated, *in*
this matter.

12. It was one of the great objections which the heathen
 made to Christianity, that it was an idle profession. Tertull.
 Apol. cap. 42.

17. I do not pretend to understand this very difficult passage ;
 and therefore I have given it a general signification. Indeed I
 think

- alive at that great day, or whether we be dead,
 CHAP. V. it matters not; when Christ shall come to judgment,
 all the faithful shall be united with him. Let this
 1. be your consolation. But at what time these great
 events shall be brought about, is a matter which we
 2. are no way concerned to know. One thing we all
 know, that the day of the Lord will come like a
 3. *thief in the night*, and find the world in a state of full
 4. security.—God forbid, my brethren, that you
 5. 6. should be thus found! You are the children of the
 7. day. Preserve that character. Be vigilant and at-
 8. tentive. Night is the season of sloth and riot. With
 these things the children of the day are at variance.
 Be you, like good centinels, always under arms;
 9. girt round with the breast-plate of faith and love, and
 taking the hope of salvation for a helmet—that hope,
 10. which was purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ;
 who died for our sins, and is the great foundation of
 our comfort and happiness, both in this world and
 11. the next. Let these things, therefore, fortify you in
 your spiritual warfare. Continue to exhort and
 strengthen each other.
 12. Fail not in a due respect to those who are your
 spiritual guides; and esteem them for the sake of
 13. their labour.—Be at peace among yourselves. Re-

think it is rather presuming to endeavour to explain it. "*We who are alive*, says the apostle, *shall not prevent them which are asleep—and the dead in Christ shall rise first.*" These passages apparently relate to some great event at the consummation of all things. And though we have other hints, in different parts of scripture, particularly in the Revelations (xx. 4, 5, 6.) which seem relative to the same event; yet the whole is so obscure, that I think we ought to be very cautious in our interpretations.

buke

buke the disorderly. Encourage the humble. Assist 14.
 the weak. Shew forbearance to all. Return not 15.
 evil for evil; but be kind and affectionate, not only
 among yourselves, but to others. Let holy joy fill 16. 17. 18.
 your hearts. Let it continually break out in pray-
 ers and praises; and thus confirm in yourselves, 19.
 more and more, the grace of God.—Attend to 20. 21.
 preaching; but prove the doctrine by the word of
 God.—Abstain from the very appearance of evil: 22.
 and may the God of peace sanctify you; so that you 23.
 may be pure and holy at the coming of our Lord
 Jesus Christ, in whose gracious promises let us con- 24.
 tinually trust.—Make us the constant subject of 25.
 your prayers. Salute all the brethren in our name; 26.
 and let this epistle be read in your assembly. 27.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you 28.
 all. Amen!

19. *Quench not the spirit*: Lord Barrington (Misc. Sac. vol. i. p. 140.) ingeniously supposes this expression alludes to the flame of fire, under which appearance the Spirit originally descended.

21. It appears from the beginning of the second chapter of the next epistle, that false teachers had already begun to infuse their doctrines.

SECOND EPISTLE

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

CHAP.
I.
1. 2.

PAUL, Silas, and Timothy, to the Christian church at Theſſalonica, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt !

With thankſgiving to God we hear of the increaſe
of your faith and charity ; and we mention every
where that Chriſtian ſpirit with which you bear
perſecution, as an example to all the churches of
Chriſt. And herein, my brethren, are the righteous
judgments of God fulfilled. They who perſecute
you, ſhall draw puniſhment on themſelves ; and
you who are perſecuted, ſhall receive that reſt from

5. Which is a manifeſt token of the righteous judgment, &c. That is, we conclude from your innocent ſufferings here, that God muſt be a righteous judge hereafter.

your labours which the Lord shall give you at the
 8. 9. last great day. He will then punish the wicked and
 10. disobedient as they deserve; and will receive his
 11. saints into mansions of never-ending glory. We
 pray, therefore, that your faith may bring you off
 conquerors in all your trials; and that you may be
 12. found worthy of acceptance with God—that the gos-
 pel of Christ may be glorified by you, and you by
 CHAP. it, through the grace of God.

II.

1. 2. 3. And now I beseech you not to regard the decep-
 tions of those who would persuade you that the day
 of judgment is at hand. Before that day, the
 4. church hath many a fiery trial to pass through: and
 among other kinds of opposition, profane and
 blasphemous attempts will be made to set up the
 5. creature, in the room of the Creator. You may
 remember, that I told you of these things when I
 6. was with you. They shall not speedily come to pass;

8. This punishment seems to include both those who act con-
 trary to the light of nature, and that of revelation.

11. *The good pleasure of God's goodness* is a strong expression of the
 divine benevolence.

12. It is translated, *According to the grace of our God, and the
 Lord Jesus Christ*. But some interpreters contend, that as the
 article *το* is not in the Greek, it should be, *our God, and Lord
 Jesus Christ*,

1. *By the coming, and by our gathering*, should be translated,
About the coming, or concerning, &c.

2. *Nor by letter*: as if they had put some false glosses on his
 former epistle.

4. See this very difficult passage, with regard to *the man of sin*,
 applied to the papal power, by Bp. Newton in his *Diff. on Proph.*
 —and by Bp. Hurd in his eleventh sermon on prophecy: and
 expressly treated by Dr. Benson in his *Dissertation on the man of sin*.
 —*Σεισάκου* may apply to any thing held in high reverence.

but

but all of them shall be revealed in due time. This 7.
 opposition to the truth hath already begun to work ;
 and will continue, though it may be prevented for a
 time. At length the wicked opposers of the truth 8.
 shall be finally beaten down, who, with all the arts 9. 10.
 and deceptions of Satan, beguiled others, after hav-
 ing first rejected the truth themselves. As they have 11. 12.
pleasure in wickedness, they will forget God, and be-
 come a prey to their own delusions.

For you, my brethren, in the mean time, we give 13.
 thanks to God. From the first of our publication
 of the gospel among you, you listened to the truth ;
 and fully believing it, were sanctified through the
 Spirit. By us you have been called to salvation : 14. 15.
 let us then exhort you to stand fast in all the doc-
 trines you have received : and may the merciful 16.
 and gracious God, and Jesus Christ, on whom all
 our hopes depend, comfort and establish you in all 17.
 goodness !

Finally, my brethren, pray for us, that the word
 of God may have as free a course among the Gen-

CHAP.

III.

1. 2.

7. They who interpret these passages of scripture, of the papal power, suppose that the power that *withholdeth* or *letteth*, is the Roman government. When that should be dissolved, the Roman hierarchy should supply its place. Tertullian, Augustine, and Chrysostom all agree in saying that Anti-Christ should not appear till after the fall of the Roman empire.

8. *Wicked.* ἄνομοι, lawless. It is remarkable, that the pope in the canon-law is said to be, *Omni lege humanâ solutus.* — *Nec totus clerus, nec totus mundus potest judicare papam.* — *Consume* (ἀναλυσαι) *to waste by little and little.*

12. *Damned.* Κριθῶσι ; judged.

15. In the original, the word παραδόσεις, or *traditions*, is used ; but the papist will remember, that by *traditions* nothing is here meant but *instruction immediately from the mouth of an apostle.*

VOL. II.

U

tiles

tiles here, as it hath had among you : and that God would, in his good time, deliver us from the persecutions of such as oppose the truth. He is the only foundation of trust. In him we have confidence, that you will live up to the religion you have received. May your hearts be filled with the love of God, and the patient expectation of the coming of Christ !

6. With apostolic authority, I enjoin you to withdraw from every person of your society, who behaves so as to scandalize his profession. In our behaviour, I am persuaded, you will find nothing which we may not propose as an example. Remember how we laboured, each in his profession, that we might not be chargeable to others ; not claiming any exemption, as ministers of the gospel, which we might have done ; but rather choosing to make ourselves an example ; instructing each of you, that *he who will not work, hath no right to eat*. And we are sorry to hear there are many among you, who, by troubling themselves more with other people's affairs than their own, need this reproof.—For the future, we command them, on the authority of Christ, to work quietly for their own maintenance : and do you set them a proper example. If they still continue refractory, bring them to shame, by separating them from your assemblies ; still, however, observing the end of reproof, which is only to reclaim.

8. See a note on 1 Theff. iv. 12.

May the God of peace fill you with all peace! 16. 17.
The Lord be with you! I write this salutation
with my own hand, as my usual signature in all my
epistles.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you 18.
all. Amen!

17. This *token in every epistle* might be a mean to prevent imposition, as many false epistles were probably written in the apostle's name.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

TWO EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY.

IN the first of these epistles the apostle, having reminded Timothy of the early charge that had been committed to him in preaching the gospel, gives him particular instructions—with regard to public devotions and assemblies—with regard to the behaviour of female converts—and of pastors; to whom he recommends a proper mode of opposing error. He then instructs him with regard to the government of the church; and concludes with an exhortation to particular duties.

He begins the second epistle with pastoral exhortations; and presses the necessity of avoiding trifling disputes, which draw men aside from the great points of religion: concluding with an account of the adversaries which he himself had met with.

Both these epistles were written to one of the first Christian bishops; and contain the great outlines, both of the episcopal office, and of that of all the other ministers of the church of Christ.

FIRST EPISTLE

O F

ST. PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

CHAP.

I.

PAUL, an apostle by the immediate appointment of God, unto Timothy my son in the faith; grace, mercy, and peace, through our Saviour Jesus Christ!

When I went into Macedonia, I left you at Ephesus, to have an eye on certain teachers, whose discourses to the people were made up of such trifling matter, as administered nice questions, rather than real improvement. I desired you to press home on

4. St. Paul, in this verse, and afterwards, speaks particularly against that attention which the Jews paid to genealogies. It was carried among them to a very great height. Jerome, somewhere speaking on this subject, says, *They were as well acquainted with genealogies from Adam to Zerubbabel, as with their own names.* This attention to genealogies was at first necessary in ascertaining the descent of Christ, and the completion of the prophecies. But it afterwards tended only to draw the mind from more useful pursuits. —The Jewish converts were sometimes studious to claim kindred with Christ. To this also the apostle might perhaps allude.

all your converts, that the great end of religion is charity, proceeding from an honest heart, a good
 6. 7. conscience, and a sincere faith : which doctrine, easy as it is, hath been perverted by many, who set up to teach what they do not understand.

8. Nor do they represent us fairly. We by no means despise the law. We consider the ceremonial part of
 9. 10. it as an introduction to Christianity : and the moral law—not, indeed, as able to justify mankind—but
 11. as the means of restraining wickedness. This, you know, hath ever been the tenor of that doctrine which I have taught, through the mercy of God,
 12. who hath enabled me to teach it, though I was formerly one of its greatest persecutors. But God had
 13. mercy on my ignorance, and shed his grace upon
 14. 15. me ; making me an example of that great truth, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners—a
 16. 17. subject on which the praise and gratitude of mankind can never be exhausted.

18. Let me entreat you, then, again to press home the true doctrines of Christianity as an able minister, under the appointment of the Holy Spirit of God.
 19. Let it be your constant doctrine, that faith and a good life must go hand in hand ; and that where the latter is wanting, the former can never exist.

8. The *ceremonial law* is not expressly mentioned ; but as its introduction to Christianity is a very scriptural idea, it seems to be comprehended under the expression of *using the law lawfully*.

18. The word *παρρησια*, I think, shews, that this verse has reference to the 3d and 5th verses of this chapter, in which the same word is used.—I should rather translate *προφητιας*, *prophetic gifts*, than *prophecies*.

Among

Among these defective Christians may be numbered 20.
Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have treated
with such severity, as, I hope, will lead them to
repentance.

CHAP.

II.

But to be more particular in my directions; 1. 2.
I exhort you, first, in your religious assemblies, to
pray for all mankind; and among them, for the
princes under whose government you live, that you 3.
may be allowed the profession of your religion. This
is agreeable to the spirit of that gospel, which is
extended to *all mankind*. For as there is one God, 4. 5.
so there is one Mediator, who laid down his life for
all. And it is, indeed, to the Gentile part of the 6. 7.
world, however opposite this doctrine may be to
Jewish prejudices, that I am appointed an apostle.
It is not, therefore, only in a Jewish temple or syna- 8.
gogue, where the prayers of the righteous are heard;
I enjoin Christians to hold their public assemblies in
all places; and to pray for all mankind, without ani-
mosity and prejudice.

1. I should suppose the words *δευσις*, *προσιυχας*, and *επεισεις* are not synonymous; though it may be difficult to affix a proper meaning to each. The first perhaps signifies *prayer in our necessities*—the second, *the deprecation of evil*—and the third, *intercession for others*.

5. *There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*. This verse Dr. Priestly quotes as an argument against the divinity of Christ. He quotes it *without the context*: with it, it has a different air. *God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth: for (ver. 5.) he is equally the God of all; and Christ is equally the Saviour of all.*—This verse has had the misfortune to be misrepresented also by Beza. Beza did not hold the doctrine of *universal redemption*; and therefore translates *παντας ανθρωπους*, *quosvis homines*.

Exhort,

9. 10. Exhort, also, your-female converts to modesty of apparel; to clothe themselves with Christian virtues, instead of costly attire: and let them not preach in your assemblies; nor do any thing contrary to the original subjection which they owe to man. I mean not, however, to encourage any useless austerities. A state of marriage is very consistent with a state of salvation: all I require from women in that state, is, **CHAP.** the faith and love and purity of Christians.

III.
 1. 2. With regard to the government of the church, the office of a bishop must be considered as a very arduous employment. A bishop must be a man of unexceptionable character—no polygamist before his conversion—active—serious—regular—ready to receive the ignorant, and desirous to instruct them—

11. On laying the various texts together, in relation to a woman's teaching in public (see a note on 1 Cor. xiv. 34.) I am inclined to establish this distinction. If the woman were immediately inspired, as many were in those days, *she might preach*; if not, she was to *learn in silence with all subjection*. Whereas the man was allowed to preach, whether he were immediately inspired or not.

15. There are many interpretations of this text. What I have given appears to me the most natural and easy—especially, as it is very probable from other passages of St. Paul (see the ivth and vth chapters of this epistle, and Heb. xiii. 4.) that a state of celibacy was then beginning to be thought purer than a state of marriage.

2. *The husband of one wife*. It does not appear, that if a polygamist embraced Christianity, he was ordered to put away all his wives except one; but the apostle here fixes an indelible stigma on the practice of polygamy, by excluding from the ministry all who had been polygamists before their conversion.—The Greek church takes this text in so odd a way, that it is held *absolutely requisite* in a bishop to be the husband of one wife; and what is still more singular, when the wife dies, the episcopal office of the husband ceases. At least that used to be the practice. See Perry's Account of Russia, p. 230.

temperate—

temperate—gentle—moderate; and free from the
 least taint of covetousness. Let him first shew, by
 the regularity and decency of his own family, how
 well able he is to govern the church of God. Nor
 would I have a new convert appointed to this office,
 lest he may not yet have acquired that steadiness and
 humility which are necessary to discharge it: but let
 him have the most ample testimony in his favour from
 the Jews, or heathen he hath left, lest any aspersion
 on his past life should prevent the effects of his
 ministry.

Let the deacon also be a man of modesty and sim-
 plicity; temperate and moderate; uniting pure man-
 ners with sincere faith. Till he have approved him-
 self such let him not be admitted. The polygamist
 I set aside; but consider it as a great recommenda-
 tion to the church, if a man have carefully instructed
 and governed his own family. Thus living, the
 deacon shews himself worthy of a higher office.—
 Let the deaconesses also be women of unexceptionable
 characters. Busy, talking, indiscreet women are

11. The word *ὑποδιάκονος* in our translation is rendered *wives*; but as the apostle is speaking of the ministers of the church, and as we know there was formerly an order of women called *deaconesses*, who assisted at the baptism of female converts, and were employed in attending the sick, and other offices of charity, it is most likely that these are the persons meant.—The old interpreters of scripture gave this sense to the passage. *Περὶ τῶν τοῦ ἀξιώματος τῆς διακονίας ἔχουσιν γυναῖκες.* *The apostle speaks of those who held the office of deaconess.* Chrys. in locum.—I have taken a little liberty in transposing the words, as it makes the sense rather easier; but it is not at all necessary to the interpretation I have given.

13. *Great boldness.* A good conscience, and faithful discharge of a man's duty, give him a confidence in his work which nothing else can give him.

14. 15. very improper to be employed.—I intend soon to see you ; but lest I should be prevented, I transmit these instructions, that, in the mean time, the church
16. may suffer no detriment. —Great, no doubt, is the work in which we are engaged. The redemption of man is a scheme full of greatness and wonder. God was manifest in the flesh—proved by prophecies—announced by angels—received into glory—and shall
- CHAP. hereafter be preached and believed on throughout all
IV. the world.

1. 2. But though Christianity depends on the strongest evidence, we are assured by the Spirit of prophecy, that many, misled by false principles and corrupt
3. 4. 5. practices, shall apostatize from the truth—that they shall engage men in unnecessary restraints, and fill their minds with trifling and absurd exceptions, which are contrary to the purity of religion and the benignity of God. Oppose these corruptions with
6. 7. 8. steadiness. Oppose them by a holy example. Teach your converts, that outward observances are of no avail : but that a pious life produces happiness both
9. here and hereafter. This is true religion, and it is
10. in a great measure for holding this doctrine—faith in Christ and good works, in opposition to outward observances, that I have suffered so much persecution.

16. See this difficult text detailed and explained in Bp. Hurd's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 332. —The expression *God manifest in the flesh*, is capable, I think, only of one sense.

10. In the text it is, *Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe* ; which words can only mean that he is universally the Saviour of all mankind who believe.

Be you therefore a faithful follower of my steps ; 11.
 and let your gravity and piety discountenance those 12.
 who can object only to your youth. Exhort your 13.
 converts publicly and privately ; conscientiously dis-
 charging that trust which the Holy Spirit, and the 14.
 imposition of the hands of the presbytery have laid
 upon you. These two great points keep ever in 15. 16.
 view—your *life* and your *doctrine*. Make them the
 only objects of your attention. They are the great
 means of your own salvation, and of the salvation of
 others.

CHAP.
V.

With becoming modesty rebuke the old—the 1.
 young with the tenderness of a brother—the female 2.
 penitent with cautious gravity.—Let the church 3. 4.
 seek out destitute widows ; and remind the children
 and near relations of widows in general, to maintain
 the indigent of their own families, when they are
 able. He who neglects this duty, neglects even 5. 6. 7. 8.
 what the heathen practises. The widow, who is 9. 10.
 taken into the service of the church, must long have
 been dead to the world : she must long have been
 esteemed for piety, domestic virtues, and works of
 charity. Till she be threescore years of age, I would
 not have her eligible. Nor would I have those
 chosen, who have engaged lightly in second marri-
 ages. Young widows, though devoted to the church, 11. 12. 13.
 may, to the great scandal of it, engage in heathen 14. 15. 16.

10. *If she have washed the saints feet, means only in the Jewish idiom, if she hath entertained them kindly ; or done good offices to them.*

alliances, as some have done. At least, there is often a levity in them, which is not agreeable to so sacred a dedication. Let them, therefore, if they choose it, engage again in the married state, and shew a laudable example in the education of their families. By no means, however, let them be burthen some to the church, if their relations can maintain them. The church hath real objects enough to provide for.

17. 18. The pious pastor well deserves his maintenance, on the principles both of the law and the gospel.
19. —Hear no accusation against a presbyter, unless
20. supported by two or three witnesses. But if he be proved guilty, let him be publicly rebuked, as an
21. example to others. With all earnestness, and in the name of God and Christ, I charge you to perform the duties of your function, without prejudice and
22. partiality. Fill the offices of the church with great caution. Few consider sufficiently the danger of partaking in other men's sins. Your own example will
- 23.

17. This expression, in the original, *Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour*, applies more happily to the case of the pluralist, than any other in the Testament. It admits so easy a version, "Let the pious pastor have two livings." I mean not, however, to enter into any argument on this question; all I mean to say, in commenting on this text, is, that I think it nothing to the purpose. —It seems plain, indeed, from the context, that *τιμω* signifies more than an *empty honour*—an *emolument* rather of some kind. But as the apostles and early Christians seem not to have had the least idea of expence beyond the necessities of life, it is not to be supposed that the emolument here mentioned could extend farther. All good pastors deserved a maintenance. None wanted or wished for more. To be counted *worthy of double maintenance*, I should think, therefore, means only to shew, how very well they deserved a maintenance at all: they were doubly worthy of it.

always

always be pure—(indeed, as far as your health is concerned, I have thought you too abstemious,) but the necessity of caution, in filling the offices of the church, arises from the great deceit and plausibility of mankind. The characters of few men are so conspicuous as not to require a very nice examination.

CHAP.
VI.

The Christian religion introduces no change in the civil rights of mankind. Let the servant, therefore, be taught obedience to his master, whether he be a heathen or a Christian. He who carries his ideas of gospel-liberty beyond this, involves his hearers in debate and animosity. It is not the *station of life*, which is the *source of happiness* to the religious breast. True piety wants no succours from the world. The enjoyments of life accompany us only to the close of it. What, then, need we more than food and raiment? A thirst after worldly enjoyments is wholly incompatible with the virtues of a Christian; and all who are misled by worldly things, will find mischief and ruin in the end.

Let your disinterested behaviour, then, set an example of Christian virtues to a selfish world. Go on manfully to combat the enemies of that faith, under the banners of which you serve; and before God and Christ, I beseech you to maintain uncorrupt the doctrines you have received; waiting, with silent hope, the fulfilling of those promises, which no mortal can conceive. Instruct the rich not to depend on the good things they enjoy; but on God,

the

18. the giver of them. Instruct them to grow rich in
19. good works—in *giving*, rather than in *hoarding*. In-
struct them to lay up for themselves a *treasure* that
will *last for ever*.
20. I conclude, as I began, with exhorting you to
preserve faithfully the doctrines that have been com-
mitted to you ; and to avoid all trifling, difficult, and
21. unnecessary questions. Curious inquirers have often
carried on their researches, till they have lost them-
selves in infidelity.—The grace of God be with
you. Amen.

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO
TIMOTHY.

SECOND EPISTLE

O F

ST. PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

CHAP.

I.

PAUL, by the immediate direction of God, appointed an apostle and preacher of that gospel which proclaims eternal life—to my beloved Timothy, grace, mercy, and peace !

The remembrance of our last affectionate parting makes me desirous of seeing you again. But however that be, it is a great happiness that I can thank God with sincerity for that unshaken faith which you have hitherto maintained ; and which hath, in a manner, descended to you by inheritance. Again, therefore, I write, to excite in you, more and more, a holy zeal in the discharge of that office which hath been conferred upon you. Fear not the opposition of men ; but trust in the power of God. Consider the evidences of religion ; and submit with me to

6. The original word *αυζωπυρσαι* is very strong ; signifying to blow up, or kindle.

9. 10. bear affliction, for the sake of that gospel, unto which the free grace of God hath called us—that gospel which, having been originally planned before the world began, hath now in Christ abolished death, and
11. thrown a new light upon immortality.—This is the gospel which I am appointed to preach to the Gentiles; and for which, also, I suffer persecution;
12. trusting in those faithful promises which cannot de-
13. ceive. Unite with me, therefore, in the courageous maintenance of this faith—in the uniform practice of
14. the duties which it enjoins—and in the conscientious discharge of that function in which it hath engaged us.
15. I find myself deserted by all the Asiatic Christians;
16. 17. 18. among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. In the midst of this desertion, neither shame, nor any
- CHAP. other worldly principle, hath prevented Onesiphorus
11. from ministering to me at Rome, as he had done be-
1. 2. fore at Ephesus. May God reward his pious labours; and may you imitate his fortitude! May the grace

9. *Who hath called us—according to his own purpose and grace.* No doubt the gospel was given by the *free grace of God*; that is, mankind were totally undeserving of it. But this doctrine is surely much perverted when it is drawn to say, that the salvation it brings is therefore given arbitrarily to one, and denied to another. The heathen, we doubt not, who live up to the light God hath given them, receive the benefit of the atonement of Christ.

10. *Φωτίζω* does not properly signify *to bring to light*; but rather *to throw light upon*.—Mr. Parkhurst supposes the word here relates to the completion of God's promises in a Redeemer, which is a natural and easy sense. See his Lexicon.

12. *To keep that which I have committed—that is, my soul.*

16. *He was not ashamed of my chain.* The apostle speaks of that chain which he wore as a prisoner at large, according to the Roman custom. See a note on Acts xxviii. 16.

of God strengthen you in all things; and enable you to instruct those who may instruct others!

Your station is that of a soldier of Christ. You 3. 4.
 have the difficulties of your profession before you;
 and if you wish to please your Superior, you must
 withdraw your mind from every thing but your duty.
 In the heathen games, an eager contest, regulated by 5.
 the laws of the course, precedes the crown. The 6.
 husbandman labours before he tastes his crop. I need 7.
 not point out the application of these allusions to the
 Christian minister. Remember always your suffering 8.
 Saviour. His death preceded his ascension. How 9. 10.
 can I repine at my own sufferings and imprisonment,
 when I consider them as the gracious means, in the
 hands of God, of drawing the Gentiles to salvation?
 It is the great comfort of our holy religion, that if 11. 12. 13.
 we die unto sin, we shall live with Christ; and if we
 suffer for him, we shall be exalted also with him.
 On the other hand, if we renounce our profession,
 we may bring ruin on ourselves; but we cannot alter
 the promises and threatenings of God.

Press these doctrines, therefore, earnestly on your 14. 15.
 converts. Charge them to lay aside their frivolous
 disputes; and like a Jewish priest, presiding at a
 sacrifice, teach them to sever the nobler parts from

10. The word *ἐκλεκτός*, or *elect*, has evidently no relation to the election or reprobation of individuals; but relates plainly to the Gentiles, as *elected*, or *called by God*, into partnership with the Jews in all the benefits of the gospel.

15. The expression in the original, *rightly dividing the word of truth*, is thought to allude, as I have here rendered it, to the priest's office in sacrificing.

16. the ignoble. An attention to these frivolous things
 17. 18. leads to impiety. Hence sprang the heresy of Hy-
 19. meneus and Philetus; who now deny the resurrec-
 20. tion, and have drawn a party after them, though
 nothing can be plainer, nor stand firmer, than our
 hopes in this great article. We have God's promise,
 21. if, on our part, we lead holy lives.—But we are
 not to wonder at this defection. As, in a great house,
 there are a variety of utensils, some of an elegant,
 and others of a coarser construction; so in the church
 of Christ, there will ever be a difference among its
 22. members: but our business is to endeavour to make
 ourselves such vessels as are *appropriated to the mas-
 ter's use*; in which no dregs are contained, but li-
 quors of the purest kind.
23. I cannot, therefore, press you too earnestly to avoid
 these novel doctrines. A sound faith and good life
 are all that a Christian has to concern himself about.
23. 24. 25. I have just informed you that these frivolous questions
 26.

22. The words *νωτερικας επιθυμιας* seem to be more *literally* translated, as we have them, *youthful lusts*; but I rather prefer the sense here given, which some critics have approved. The verb *νωτεριζω*, properly signifies to *innovate*. I see not, therefore, why the adjective may not signify *new*. And as to the word *επιθυμια*, it is taken in so many different senses in the New Testament, that if we argue either from its *use* or *derivation*, we may apply it to any thing on which the *mind is bent*. St. Peter uses it in this sense. 1 Peter i. 12.—If then the *terms allow* this interpretation, the *context seems to require* it. The whole tenor of the chapter opposes rather erroneous doctrines, than impure practices.—Besides, a caution against *youthful lusts*, one should suppose, unnecessary to a person whom the apostle himself (1 Tim. v. 23.) blames rather for abstemiousness; though, in the midst of the refinements of philosophy, it is possible he might have been in some danger of being led aside by *new fancies* in religion, in opposition to those genuine doctrines of Christianity which are touched in the beginning of this chapter.

lead

lead to impiety. I may add, also, that they produce animosity : and how unbecoming a contentious temper is, in a minister of Christ, I need not tell you. Gentleness and patience should be characteristic in him. By these he endeavours to draw the straying Christian from vice and error ; and lead him to the acknowledgment and practice of the truth †. Cor-
 ruption, in a degree, is inseparable from the purest church—wickedness will prevail—and the form of religion, instead of the spirit of it, will possess the minds of men. They will not be satisfied with living in error themselves, unless they lead others after them, and boldly oppose the truth. While God permits it, this contest between truth and error must subsist, and increase. Be not, however, discouraged. Persevere in the duties of a Christian ; and remember that persecution and religion are ever nearly allied.

Your education hath been superior to that of the generality of men. Study those scriptures, therefore, which, from a child, you have revered. They will

† I am obliged, in order to preserve the harmony of composition, to give this passage in the same modernized form as the other parts of the epistle : but no language can reach the pleasing simplicity of the original. There is a mildness in the expression which indicates the thing. “ The servant of the Lord must not strive ; but be gentle unto all men ; apt to teach ; patient ; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.”

8. Jannes and Jambres are instanced among those who opposed the truth. It is remarkable, that Jannes is mentioned with Moses, in Pliny's Natural History, as an eminent magician. See his Index.

15. He had known the holy scriptures from a child, because his mother was a Jewess. See Acts xvi. 1.

throw the best light on the dispensation of the gospel; and besides the instructive lessons they contain, will furnish the Christian teacher with every needful assist-

CHAP. ^{ance.}

IV.
 1. 2. 3. 4. Exercise, then, I earnestly charge you before God, all the functions of your ministry. Preach, rebuke,

exhort: but do every thing with humility and gentleness. You and all your successors are called on for the exertion of every conciliating virtue. A general corruption shall overspread both teachers and hearers. All this the minister of Christ must bear. He must learn to suffer: but he must also oppose falsehood, and steadily maintain the truth.

6. For myself, I expect shortly to give my last great testimony to the truth of the gospel. My labours are almost over; and I have only to hope, with my fellow-labourers, for the gracious acceptance of my great Master.

9. 10. 11. I could wish you to be here with me as soon as you can. Most of my assistants in the gospel I have sent on several charges. Demas, preferring the world to the gospel, hath deserted me. Luke alone is with me.

6. There is great elegance and force in the original word, *συνδύω*; my blood is about to be poured out like a libation. But I have omitted the metaphor, as it is too bold for a less animated phraseology than the original.

10. Some who date the epistle to the Colossians after this to Timothy, do not suppose that Demas had apostatized; but had only behaved, in some respects, improperly: for in Coloss. iv. 14, he is mentioned respectfully among Paul's friends. The case of Demas depends entirely on the dates of the two epistles.

I shall

I shall want the assistance of Mark : bring him with you ; and remember the papers and other things which I left at Troas. I have been, indeed, both 13. 14. 15. 16. opposed and deserted by many, during my imprisonment. God will deal with the adversaries of our faith according to his own good pleasure. May their opposition never appear against them ! A gracious God, 17. 18. however, has supported me, and will support me,

13. Among different conjectures about the *cloke* mentioned here, some have supposed it a *cloke-bag* ; others have supposed it the apostle's Jewish dress, which he should soon want ; leaving his Roman dress till he came into those parts again.

14. The only person mentioned here by name, who made opposition to the apostle, is one *Alexander, a copper-smith* ; probably the same person who is spoken of in the first chapter of the first epistle. As Timothy, who was bishop of Ephesus, is cautioned against him, it is probable that Alexander was an Ephesian, sojourning among other strangers at Rome ; where he took an opportunity to oppose the apostle's preaching. St. Paul says, he had *greatly withstood his words* : but there is no reason to suppose any argumentative opposition. Alexander the copper-smith was probably connected with his countryman Demetrius the silver-smith, and opposed the gospel just as that artisan had done—not by argument, but by tumult. St. Paul's expression to Timothy leads to this sense. *Ὁς καὶ σὺ φυλάσσει ; observe him—have a prudent eye upon him*—as he might have been a popular as well as an ill-disposed person. It is probable also, that this is the same person who is mentioned as a leader of the infidel Jews at Ephesus. See Acts xix. 33.

14. *The Lord reward him*, &c. as we have it in our translation. The proper tense of the word *reward* here, in the original, deserves as much to be investigated as any word in the New Testament. *Αποδοῖν* is the reading our translators have taken, which plainly puts an unchristian curse into the apostle's mouth. But if they had lived in later days, when collating MSS. was more in use, they would no doubt have taken the future tense, *αποδοσῇ*, *the Lord will reward him* ; which they might have found in some of the best and most authentic MSS. That the apostle did not mean a *curse*, is evident from the 17th verse, in which he prays that it may be averted.

17. *Out of the mouth of the lion*, is supposed to refer to Nero ; before whom in person, it is imagined, the apostle was brought.

under all my sufferings ; which will give efficacy, I doubt not, to my preaching among the Gentiles.

19.20.21. All the brethren here desire their salutations. Erastus is still at Corinth. Trophimus I have left sick at Miletum.—I shall depend on seeing you here before winter.

22. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you !
Amen !

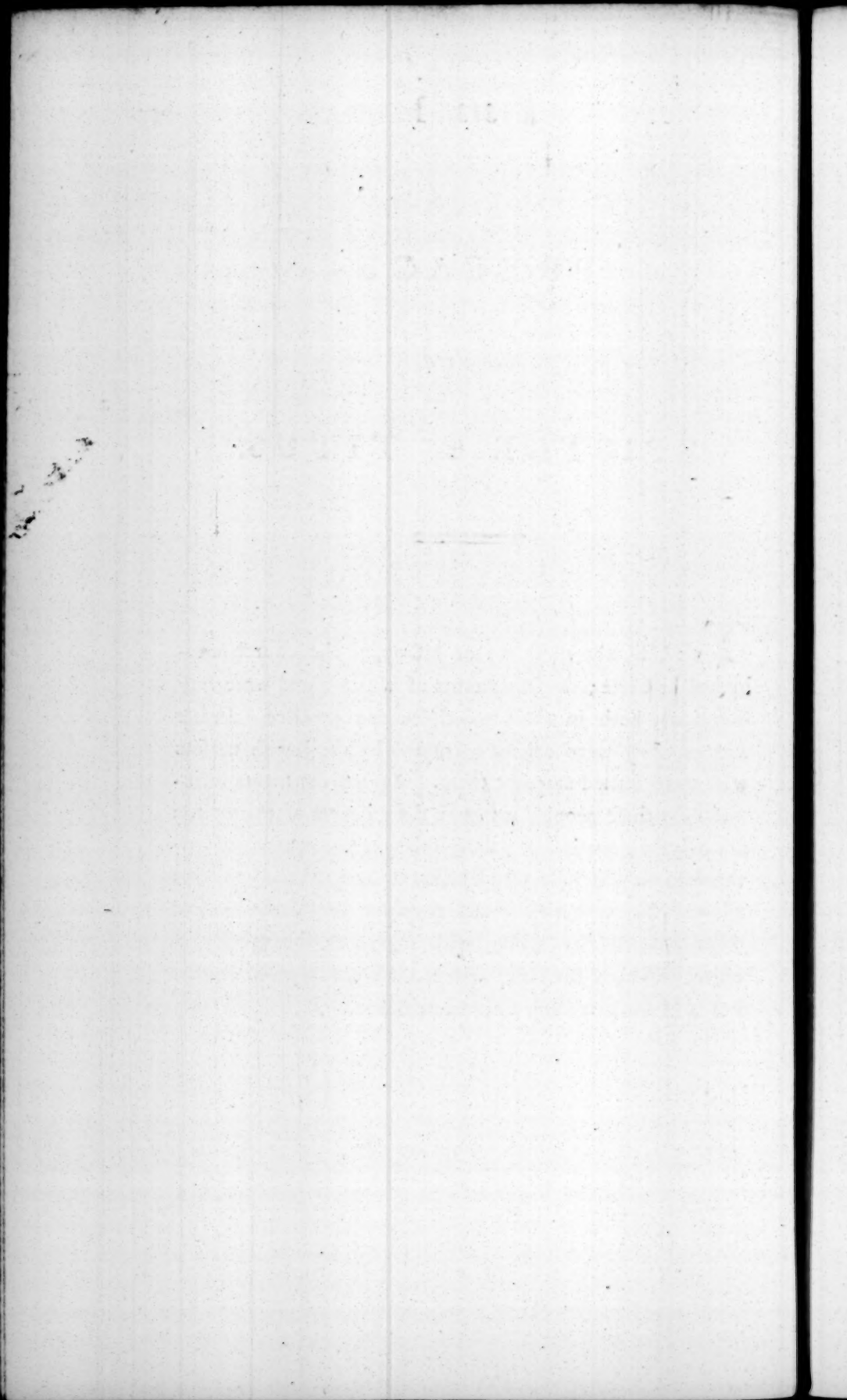
END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO
TIMOTHY.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE TO TITUS.

TITUS was president or bishop of the church established in Crete; the inhabitants of which island were very licentious, both in their principles and practice. In the former, they were chiefly corrupted by the Jewish zealots who were settled amongst them. Against the tenets introduced by these people, many of the precepts of this epistle are pointed; particularly those relating to servants and governors; as the judaizing Christians seem scarcely to have allowed the authority of any governor but God.—The other part of the epistle, with regard to the ministerial office, is nearly the same with the instruction given on that head, in the foregoing epistles, to Timothy.



EPISTLE

TO

T I T U S.

CHAP.

I.

PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ; and preacher
 of that gospel which promises eternal life; and
 which, though now first opened, was designed before
 the world began—to Titus, my beloved convert,
 grace, mercy, and peace!

The principal purpose for which I left you in
 Crete, was to regulate and carry on there the great
 work of conversion which I had begun; and to
 ordain ministers in the several towns.—I repeat
 the instructions I gave you on this head. The mi-
 nister of the gospel must be a person of blameless
 life. I object to a polygamist: but would have an
 orderly family esteemed a recommendation. He
 must consider himself in the light of God's steward.
 He must be gentle, temperate, untainted by avarice,
 devoted

devoted to God, charitable to man, and, above all things, well established in the truth of religion, that he may be prepared, as opportunity offers, either to instruct or reprove.

10. 11. 12. Great occasion has a minister of Crete in particular to exert all his prudence and knowledge: for the people are false and licentious, both in principle and practice; and characterised as such, even by their own writers. Nor are they, in a small degree, corrupted by the infusion of Jewish prejudices.

13. 14. Treat them, therefore, with plainness. Point out to them the inefficacy of Jewish traditions. Shew them how inconsistent they are with the intention of

15. the gospel. Inform them, that purity does not consist in abstaining from particular meats; but in an

16. unpolluted mind: and press upon them, that all who make profession of Christianity, be they Jews or

CHAP. Gentiles, without observing its moral precepts, are
11. abominable in the sight of God.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. These sound doctrines inculcate steadily, but with
6. 7. 8. proper distinctions, on all ranks of people; holding up, in your own life, a pattern of virtuous behaviour. This will grace your doctrine; and tend, more than any thing, to silence and reconcile oppo-

9. 10. sition.—Remember especially to instruct servants

12. St. Paul quotes this verse from Epimenides. The meaning it conveys is, that the *Cretans were a false people; and united in their character the ferocity of the wild beast, and the luxury of the domesticated one.* As to their falsehood, κεντιζων was a proverbial expression for lying.

to obey their masters ; informing them, that fidelity in a trust is among the greatest ornaments of the gospel.

Thus, like a good pastor, lay before your converts the great end and intention of Christianity—that it is a system of religion, instructing us in the conscientious discharge of our duty to God, our neighbour, and ourselves : and in the belief and hope of that happiness which we shall receive hereafter, through the death of Christ, if we answer the end of this holy institution, by purifying ourselves from the corruptions of the world. Let these doctrines, then, be the chief subject of your exhortations ; and rebuke with that authority which over-awes contempt.

11. 12.

13.

14.

15.

CHAP.
III.

1. 2.

Preach subjection to magistrates—a readiness to do good—an abhorrence of doing injury. Point out the propriety of gentleness and forbearance on all occasions ; considering the wickedness and follies in which we ourselves were immersed, before the goodness of God in Christ redeemed us from sin, and made us heirs of salvation, through his grace, not our own deserts. It is in vain, tell your converts, to talk of faith, without good works. On these insist, and not on frivolous questions, which produce only debate.

8.

9.

9. See a note on 1 Tim. i. 4,

10. The word *πιστις*; here can mean only *fidelity*.

Notwith-

10. 11. Notwithstanding, however, the gentleness and forbearance which are due on all occasions, some church-discipline may be necessary; and he who continues obstinate in his wickedness, after a second admonition, must be severed from your communion. I mean not, however, this severity against mere opi-

11. I have given what appears to be the apostle's meaning. To the idea of heresy he affixes a *bad heart*, as well as an *erroneous opinion*. *A man that is an heretic, says he, reject—that is, such an heretic as is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*—The same restriction which the apostle lays on church-discipline, should by parity of reason act as a restriction also on the disturbers of the peace of the church by controversy. Every man has a right to his own opinion, and to the enjoyment of it; but no man has a right to publish it in fundamentals, to the offence of others, against opinions long established; unless those opinions *come under the apostle's idea of heresy*—It may be said, the truth can never be injured by debate; and freedom of debate is the protestant's charter.—It is true; the truth can never be injured by debate, if the debate reached those only who are capable of debating. Others, a controversy may mislead.—And as to the protestant's charter, it were well if the example of the early protestants had more weight. It was the scandalous sale of indulgences for sin, which first opened their mouths. Transubstantiation, and other opinions, though in themselves absurd, as they were not openly marked with *the apostle's characteristics of heresy*, were at first treated with some respect: till by degrees, *so many things* were found to be *wicked*, that other things began to be *suspected*; and a *total change* ensued.—The example of the learned Mr. John Hales of Eton, recorded by Lord Clarendon, should never be forgotten. “He had, whether from his natural temper and constitution, or from his long retirement from all crowds, or from his profound judgment and discerning spirit, contracted some opinions which were *not received*, nor by him *published*, except in private discourses: and then rather upon occasion of dispute, than of positive opinion: and he would often say, his opinions, he was sure, did him no harm; but he was far from being confident that they might not *do others harm*, who entertained them, and might entertain *other results* from them than he did; and therefore he was *very reserved* in communicating *what he thought himself in those points* in which he differed from what *was received*.” See Lord Clarendon's Life, vol. i. p. 53.

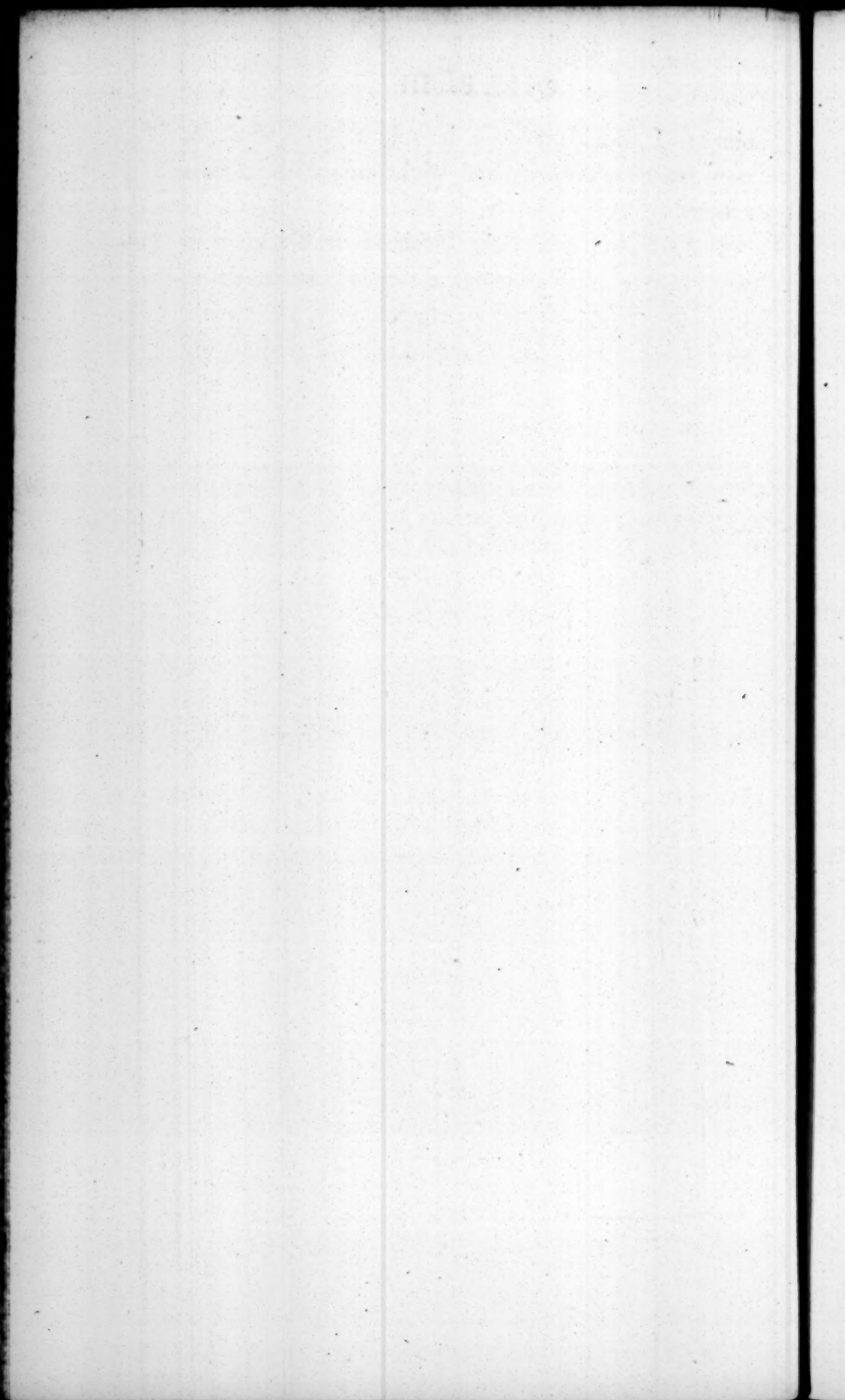
nions :

nions: I should exercise it only towards such as were self-convicted by the wickedness of their own actions.

I shall soon send either Artimas or Tychicus to you. On his arrival, meet me at Nicopolis, where I mean to continue during the winter. But before you come, send Zenas and Apollos; and supply them with what is wanting. The Jewish converts, I hope, contribute their share also in these necessary expences.

All here salute you. The grace of Jesus Christ be with you all! Amen!

END OF THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.



P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

PHILEMON had been converted by St. Paul to the Christian faith. Onesimus, his slave, the bearer of this epistle, had run away from him, and probably robbed him. At Rome, where he endeavoured to lie concealed, he fell in the way of St. Paul, through some accident, which is not communicated to us. By him he was converted to the Christian faith; brought to a thorough sense of his wickedness, and sent back to his master with the following epistle.

Some fastidious critics have shewn an inclination to rid the sacred canon, if possible, of this epistle; which they seem to think of very little importance to the Christian church.—There are many considerations, however, which I should hope would obtain more favour in its behalf.—First, it shews the admirable address of St. Paul in converting sinners. By what means of application he opened a way to the heart of a rude slave, dead, as it appears, to all principle, is matter well worth our notice.—The pleasing, obliging manner likewise, in which the apostle applied to Philemon, the slave's master, is equally interesting. The

VOL. II.

Y

whole

whole epistle, indeed, is a model of beautiful composition.

—Lastly, it is a noble lesson to the Christian minister, to see with what heartiness and zeal an apostle engaged in converting one of the lowest of all human beings; and how affectionately he treated him after he was converted. The soul of a slave was to him of equal value with the soul of a prince.

—It is very probable, that this epistle was written at the same time with the epistle to the Colossians; as may be seen from many circumstances of internal evidence, on a comparison of the two epistles.

EPISTLE

TO

PHILEMON.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2. 3.

PAUL and Timothy to Philemon and his household, grace, mercy, and peace, in God and Christ !

It is with great satisfaction and thankfulness to God that I hear of your faith and charity—that, on all occasions, you have not only shewn a Christian temper ; but given proofs of it, also, by your charitable actions. 4. 5. 6. 7.

As I have been the instrument, through God, of your embracing this faith, I might speak with the authority of a spiritual father on the subject of this letter : but laying that aside, I choose rather to address 8. 9.

9. *Paul the aged.* Dr. Whitby's calculation makes Paul at this time about sixty-three ; supposing him at the death of Stephen to be about thirty-eight.

10. 11. dress you on motives of Christian charity. The
subject of my address is your slave Onesimus; whom,
now converted, I send back to you, changed from
12. 13. a faithless fugitive into a penitent Christian. Re-
ceive *him* as you would *me*. Very gladly should
I have detained him here; that, in your room, he
might have been of comfort and assistance to me
14. in my imprisonment. But I did not choose to do
any thing in this matter, without your concurrence;
knowing how much more agreeable it is voluntarily
to confer a benefit, than to have it drawn from us
by necessity.
15. How kindly, in this matter, has the providence
of God acted towards us. You lost an unprofitable
slave for a short time, that he might become service-
16. able to you for life.—And yet a slave is not now,
perhaps, the name by which you would call him; but
rather a brother. I have esteemed him as such; and
so will you. He is now your brother, in a double
sense; as a man and as a Christian.
17. Whatever regard, therefore, you have for me,
18. shew it to him. If he hath wronged you of any
thing, place it to my account. I will repay you.
19. I speak *literally*: I mean not to balance a temporal
20. account with a spiritual one. Give me, therefore,

11. *To thee unprofitable, but now profitable.* In these words the apostle might perhaps allude to his name; *Onesimus* signifying *profitable*. Names of this kind were given to slaves, in expectation of their bringing *advantage* to their masters.

20. *Refresh my bowels.* The word in the original *ανατασσω* is very expressive: *Ease that commotion in my heart.*

the happiness to believe you will grant my request.

—But why need I so speak? Your kindness to me, I know, will do more than I desire. 21.

I would have you prepare me a lodging; as I trust that your prayers and mine will procure me deliverance, and bring us speedily together. 22.

Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner, and all my fellow-labourers here salute you. 23. 24. 25.
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! Amen!

END OF THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

WAND

P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THIS epistle seems to have been intended for the use of the whole Jewish people, however dispersed; though directed chiefly to those of Judea. It is generally supposed to have been written originally in Greek; though its language is confessedly more pure than that of St. Paul's other epistles. This hath occasioned some doubt of its authenticity; to which its not being inscribed with the apostle's name hath added a kind of sanction. But this was probably omitted *on purpose*; as it was evident (see Acts xxii. 21.) that St. Paul had made himself very obnoxious to the Jews: and as to the language, Dr. Lardner supposes, that the whole plan and sentiments of the epistle were Paul's, (of which there is strong internal evidence,) but that he might have employed some amanuensis, (as he did on other occasions,) who expressed his thoughts in purer Greek than he commonly used himself.

In this epistle, which contains a noble view of the Christian dispensation, the apostle first dwells on the dig-

nity of Christ's character, and on the superiority of the gospel to the law, 329—He shews, that, according to prophecy, the gospel could not have been administered by angels, 330—and that the Messiah must have partaken of human nature, 332—His superiority to Moses is next shewn; from whence the apostle exhorts the Jews to believe in this great dispensation, 333—The *rest of God* is next applied to *that rest* which the apostle promises, 334—Christ is delineated as a high-priest, superior to the Jewish high-priest, 335—The weakness of the Jewish Christians is pointed out in not apprehending these doctrines, 336—Melchisedec is held out as a type of Christ, 338—and from hence the dignity of Christ's priesthood is inferred, 339—The apostle recapitulates what he had said, 341—He then considers the whole Jewish economy as a system of types, 343—realised in Christ, 344—purification, in the legal sacrifice, he says, was only obtained by blood; which was a type of the blood of Christ, 345—From hence the apostle exhorts to a full dependence on his sacrifice, 347—He next exemplifies faith in many instances, 349—Then exhorting to faith and piety, he concludes with practical instructions, 357.

EPISTLE

TO THE

HEBREWS.

CHAP.

1. 2. 3.

GOD having, through various dispensations, gradually opened his will to mankind, hath at length revealed it fully by his Son; who, being endowed with infinite power, first created the world—then redeemed it—and afterwards resumed his ancient glory: being of a nature infinitely superior to all those heavenly ministers by whom the law was dispensed. This is very evident, from observing his character as marked by the prophets. Is it a language

4.

5.

3. The son is here represented as the express image of God; an idea which some writers have explained by the impression which the wax receives from the engraving of the seal. Philo calls the Logos, Χαρακτήρ ἢ εἰκὼν Θεοῦ. *The very character and image of God.*

5. As the Messiah was predicted to spring from the house and lineage of David, and as Solomon so far answered this character, and was besides the most illustrious of the Jewish kings, and founded also the temple of Jerusalem; he was considered as a type of Christ.

ever

- ever used to angels, *Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee ?* Was it literally or typically spoken of Solomon, *I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son ?* And was it not expressive of the dignity of this great character, in his exalted state, when the prophet calls upon *all the angels of God to worship him ?* The character of angels is that of *ministering spirits*. Far differently the prophet speaks of the Son. He is represented as having power and dominion over all created beings—as establishing his throne in justice and equity—as the Creator of all things—and as existing from eternity. So again, when the prophet speaks of his exalted station, as subduing the grand enemies of mankind, sin and death ; the expressions, surely, are not applicable to angels, who were not the givers of the law and the gospel ; but merely the instruments employed in those services.

CHAP.
II.

1. 2.

- All these prophetic characters of the Messiah should awaken our attention to the truths of the gospel. The inference is plain. If the transgression of the Mosaic law, revealed only through the mediation of angels, subjected the Israelites to so great a penalty, as we find it did ; what have we to answer for, if

5. Pf. ii. 7.

5. 2 Sam. vii. 14. 1 Chron. xxii. 10.

6. Pf. xcvi. 7.

7. *Made his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire—made them like the wind, and like lightning.*

7. Pf. civ. 4.

12. 13. Pf. xlv. 6, 7. cii. 25, 26, 27. cx. 1.

we neglect a law, given by the Son of God, and confirmed to us, not only by the strongest human testimony ; but by the authority of miracles, and the visible power of the Holy Ghost ? 4.

That no angelic ministration dispensed this last great revelation of God's will, is plain from the words of David ; *What is man, that thou art mindful of him ; or the son of man, that thou visitest him ? Thou madest him, for some time, lower than the angels ; thou crownedst him with glory and honour ; and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.* Now these words, though primarily spoken of Adam and his descendants, can by no means have their sole reference to man, or his dominion over the works of creation ; which, we evidently see, they have not. But they refer directly to the divine Minister of the new covenant ; and mark his character in strong terms. They point out Jesus, who was *made lower than the angels*, during his state of humiliation ; but after the 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

5. *By the world to come*, is commonly understood the restored world, or the gospel state. Many Jewish writers and early Christians were of opinion, from these passages in St. Paul, and some others in Daniel, (particularly chap. x. 13, 21.) that the world was divided into different districts, and put under the government of angels : and that in particular the Jewish nation was committed to Michael. St. Paul might have a view to this opinion, when he says the Christian world was subject only to Christ.

7. *A little*, might be rendered, *a little while* ; as it is in the margin of our Testament.

9. Our Saviour, quoting this Psalm, applies it as St. Paul does. Matt. xxi. 16.

price

price of redemption was paid, *crowned with glory and honour.*

10. Now it pleased God, however contrary to Jewish prejudices, that the great Author of our salvation should take upon him the nature of those whom he
 11. 12. 13. redeemed; and pass through a state of suffering, Thus he is represented by the prophets, calling mankind *his brethren*—and in other places, calling them *his children*. All these passages in the prophets point
 14. out the human nature of the Messiah. He partook of the same flesh and blood with those whom he redeemed; that, by subjecting himself to death, he
 15. might vanquish the power of the devil, and deliver
 16. all mankind from the bondage of sin. Instead of appearing in an angelic form, he appeared as one of
 17. the descendants of Abraham; and thought it proper to be, in all respects, like his brethren; that he might be a merciful high-priest before God, atoning
 18. for the sins of the people. What an encouragement is it to us who follow his steps, that we are succoured in all our temptations, by one, who, in every respect, hath been tempted like ourselves!

CHAP.

III.

1. 2.

But while you reflect on the humanity and humiliation of Christ; consider, on the other hand, my brethren, his dignity. One of the greatest characters which you acknowledge, is that of Moses.

12. Ps. xxii. 22.

13. If. viii. 17, 18.

14. The devil is here said to have *the power of death*, as his tempting our first parents was the original cause of death.

Faithful,

Faithful, no doubt, he was, in that appointment which God entrusted to him. But between Christ and Moses, the same difference is established by God, as we see between the master and the servant of a family. Moses precedes, as a preparatory law-giver, opening the way for something that was to follow. Christ comes after, fulfilling the types of the law; and completing that institution which Moses had only shadowed out.

Of this holy institution, my brethren, we are a part, if we persevere faithfully in our profession. Remember that passage in the psalms, in which the Israelites are exhorted to hear God's voice; and not to *harden their hearts, as their fathers did in the wilderness*; when they persisted forty years in an obstinate course of unbelief and disobedience; and provoked God at length to forbid their entering the promised land. Let this example of your forefathers be an instruction to you. They disbelieved God. Take care that you do not disbelieve the revelation of his will through Christ: but daily encourage and exhort each other, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. All depends on your holding steadily your profession to the end; and taking every opportunity of increasing in Christ.

3. As the apostle had before preferred Christ to angels, so now he prefers him to Moses. Christ was at the head of his economy. Moses was only a steward.

4. See Numb. xii. 3. in which Moses is expressly called a *servant*.

7. Psalm xciv. 8.

16.17.18. tian virtue. Some there were among your forefathers, who did not revolt from their obedience : but the greatest number were not permitted to enter
19. the promised land, but fell in the wilderness.—

Once more, therefore, let me repeat my exhortations,
CHAP. that this example of unbelief may have its full
IV. weight : and that none of us may forfeit the promise
1. 2. of that rest which is offered to *us*, as well as to *them* ; and which they forfeited through unbelief.

3. The Christian's rest depends on the same promise as that of the Israelites. Observe those passages of
4. scripture which mention *the rest of God*. After the creation was finished, God is said *to rest from his*
5. *work*. He is said also *to rest the seventh day*—and David makes an application to certain persons, who
6. were *to enter into that rest*. Since, therefore, some must enter into that rest ; and the ancient Israelites in the wilderness, to whom it was first applied, did
7. not enter into it ; it is plain that David had reference to some *future rest*—that is, he had reference to some rest, besides that of the land of Canaan ; for that *rest* had been already completed by Joshua.
9. —We conclude, therefore, that God's holy servants are to expect some *future rest* ; and that this rest
10. is to be of a holy and a spiritual kind, when they

5. Ps. xciv. 12.

8. By *Jesus* in this verse, is meant Joshua, whose name and office in leading the people to a place of rest, made him a remarkable type of Christ. In the margin he is called Joshua ; and it is only misleading ignorant readers to call him Jesus in the text.

shall rest from their earthly labours, as God is said to rest from his work.

Let it be our great endeavour, then, to enter into
 this holy rest; and make that use of the infidelity of
 our forefathers which we ought; considering espe-
 cially, that the gospel makes a still nicer discrimi-
 nation between good and bad—and that the very
 thoughts and intentions of the heart, if impure, be-
 come guilt in that discerning eye, before which, every
 part of the creation is open. Having, therefore, so
 great an high-priest, Jesus the Son of God, who is
 now making intercession for us in heaven, let us hold
 fast our faith in so merciful a deliverer. For, as I
 just observed, we have not now an high-priest, who
 cannot feel our infirmities; but one who was, in every
 respect, tempted as we are. Let us, then, come
 boldly to the throne of grace; assuring ourselves
 that we shall find, from the true mercy-seat of God, CHAP.
 sufficient help in all our distresses. V.

And now, considering Christ in the light of an
 high-priest, let us see how much his character,
 under this idea, is exalted above the Jewish high-
 priest.—In the first place, the Jewish high-priest

13. *Naked and open.* Some suppose an allusion is made here to sacrificing. As it then appears, whether the victim is pure or faulty; so, &c.

14. St. Paul here resumes the subject of the high-priest, which he had dropped at the beginning of the third chapter. The comparison of Christ with Moses; and of Christian immortality with the Jewish Canaan, had interrupted his argument.—*With whom we have to do: προς εν ημιν ε λεγος; of whom we speak.*

15. See chap. ii. 18.

was

- was a frail and erring man : and though he might have compassion on those for whom he officiated ; yet his compassion was founded on a different motive from that of Christ. He pitied the frailties of others,
3. from feeling his own : and therefore, in offering sa-
 4. crifices for them, he always included himself. — In the second place, though no man could take upon himself the Levitical priesthood, unless called by
5. God, as Aaron was ; yet Christ was not only ap-
 6. pointed by God, but had an everlasting priesthood conferred upon him, of which Melchisedec's was
7. 8. a type. — Again, the prayers and supplications and sufferings of Christ were infinitely more effi-
 9. cacious than the atonement of the Jewish high-priest. Having shewn himself superior to death, and given us an example of obedience and resigna-
 10. tion to the will of God, he was consecrated, as it were, through sufferings ; and making an atonement for the sins of the world, he became an eternal high-priest, of whom, as I observed, Melchisedec was a type.
11. Of this resemblance between Christ and Melchisedec, I could say many things to you, which would shew more fully the superiority of our Lord to the Levitical high-priest ; but I fear you are not yet
12. 13. 14. disposed to receive them. From the time of your conversion one should suppose, you might have become teachers of religion ; instead of which, I fear,

6. See Pl. cx. 4.

you have not yet digested the first principles of it. Strong meats are the food of those who are arrived at full age ; but milk, and lighter food, of children. CHAP. VI. I fear you are to be numbered among the latter.

However, leaving, for the present, the principles of religion, repentance, faith, baptism, the communication of spiritual gifts, the resurrection of the dead, and a future judgment, let us proceed, through God's permission, to these deeper points. As for those who have apostatized from the truth, after having been enlightened by the gospel—convinced by its evidence—and sanctified by its blessings ; one should suppose it utterly impossible they should ever again be restored. Like ground, which answers no longer to the pains of the husbandman, but in return for its culture, produces only weeds, they must be left to the effect of their ingratitude and infidelity.

—Notwithstanding, however, what I say, I am persuaded better things of the generality of you. And you may be assured, in particular, that God will not forget that charity, by which you have so often evidenced your religion ; and in which I hope you will constantly persevere ; after the example of all those holy patriarchs, your forefathers, who, through faith and patience, at length inherited the promises. How strict a performer of his promise God is to his faithful servants, may be concluded from his oath to Abraham, that he would bless and multiply him. This promise was first performed in a temporal way ; but is now fully completed in the gospel. Thus

- God condescending to the manner of men, who consider an oath as the most decisive proof, confirmed his promise in that way to his most obedient servants.
- And thus we Christians, who inherit the same promise, have the same foundation for the performance of it—God's word, confirmed by his oath. On this we should depend in all our distresses, raising our thoughts to the completion of it by that blessed Redeemer, who hath entered for us into the Holy of Holies—our great high-priest and intercessor; of whom (to resume my argument) Melchisedec was a type.

CHAP.
VII.

1.

This holy man, who was king of Salem, and priest of the most high God, met Abraham returning from the defeat of the five kings; and blessing him, received at his hands the tenth of all he had taken.

—Now here the first thing that strikes us, in the comparison between this prince and Christ, is the name; Melchisedec signifying *king of righteousness*; and Salem *the city of peace*.—We are next struck

with

20. Resumed from ver. 10, chap. v.

1. See Gen. xiv. 18.

3. *Without father, without mother, &c.* This is a very common way in speaking of those whose ancestors are unknown. Thus Livy says, *Patre nullo, matre serva*, l. iv. And Seneca (epist. 108.) speaking of the two Roman kings, Servius Tullius, and Ancus Marcius, says, *Alter patrem non habet; alter matrem.* *Ἀπατρὴς καὶ μητρὸς*, were common expressions among the Greeks also, to distinguish people of unknown families. Among the Jews it was always conceived, that although the Messiah was to be of the house and lineage of David, there was still some mysterious obscurity with regard to his birth. Thus his enemies remarked,

with the mode of his descent. The Levitical high-priest preserves his genealogy pure from Aaron. But of the lineage of Melchisedec nothing is said. Neither his birth nor his death is noticed. Hence, therefore, he becomes a type of that great high-priest, who had neither beginning of days nor end of life.

—Then, again, consider the greatness of that character, to whom even the patriarch Abraham paid tithes. The Levitical priest, who, by the law, received tithes of the people, may be said to have paid tithes himself to Melchisedec, in the person of his progenitor Abraham.—Consider, also, the superiority which that great high-priest assumed, in blessing our father Abraham: for, undoubtedly, it is the greater who blesses the less.

From what hath been said, then, it appears, first, that the Levitical priesthood can, by no means, be considered as a perfect institution; for then the order of Aaron needed not to have been superseded by the order of Melchisedec.—Secondly, it appears, that, as there is a change in the priesthood, there is a change also in the law. For as the people received the law under the priesthood, a new priesthood im-

remarked, that Jesus could not be the Messiah, because they *knew him to be the carpenter's son*: Mark vi. 3. And again, *When Christ shall come, no one shall know whence he is*. John vii. 27.—The application of such a phrase to Christ, as that *he had neither beginning of days, nor end of life*, can mean nothing, I think, if it do not mean a unity with the Father.

5. 6. In the text, the *blessing and receiving of tithes* are united. I thought it might be easier, and might place the resemblance in a stronger light, to separate them.

plies a new law. The tribe of Judah, from which our Lord sprang, had evidently no connection with the altar. — Thirdly, it is evident, that, from the excellency of the new priesthood, the law must also take a new excellence ; and must be changed, agreeably to the nature of the priest, from a ceremonial ritual, into a spiritual service. Otherwise, what advantage arises from a priest who is to *live for ever* ? The law of Moses is disannulled, because, being weak and imperfect, it was unable to draw its observers to perfection. The covenant of the gospel leads directly to God. — Again, let us consider the confirmation of this covenant : *The Lord swears*, saith the prophet, *and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec*. By no such designation was the Levitical priest consecrated. Therefore the new covenant, of which Christ is the high-priest, is the more excellent, because the more strongly confirmed. — From the same prophecy we are assured, that it is unchangeable also. In the Levitical priesthood, death was continually introducing change : but Christ, says the prophet, is established a *priest for ever*. — Lastly, from laying all these considerations together, we may rest assured, that we have an eternal, unchangeable high-priest, who is continually making intercession for us ; and that we shall find in him a Redeemer, who is able to save

19. The neuter *αὐτός* is often taken for *persons* as well as *things*.

21. See Psalm cx. 4.

all who come to God in his name. Holy and spotless himself; of dignity sufficient to make an atonement; he offers,—not like the Levitical priest, an offering, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people—but he offers himself, once for all, a sacrifice for the sins of mankind; thus completely fulfilling that great prophecy of the psalmist, (given long after the law,) that a new priesthood should be consecrated, not subject to the infirmities and changes of the Levitical one; but absolutely pure, holy, and eternal.

CHAP.
VIII.

The sum of what I have said is this: we Christians have a high-priest as far superior, in every instance, to the Jewish one, as a constant intercessor at the throne of God is to a priest officiating in an earthly temple. Such intercession may be considered as making him a *continual high-priest*, though the great sacrifice is offered; and he is now removed into heaven. Temple-sacrifices the Jewish priest was sufficient to offer. But here is a service which no earthly priest could perform. In fine, then, the Jewish high-priest was only a mere type of the heavenly one; as the Jewish tabernacle was of the throne of God. This was clearly expressed at the giving of the law; when Moses was ordered to make every thing *after the pattern*, which, in a heavenly vision, was shewn to him *on the mount*. And, in-

28. Pf. cx. 4.

5. See Exod. xxv. 40. and xxvi. 30.

deed, there is as much difference between the two ministrations, as between the temporal promise of a land of Canaan, and the heavenly one of an eternal habitation.

7. Now this great change of one covenant for the other, is founded on the deficiency of the law and the excellence of the gospel. If the first had been
8. perfect, there had been no room for a second. Thus the prophet Jeremiah speaks: *Behold, the days come, when I will make a new covenant with the house of*
9. *Israel, and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand, to lead them out of*
10. *Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and*
11. *I regarded them not,* saith the Lord. The prophet having thus far shewn God's intention to supersede the Jewish institution, proceeds farther to shew the nature of the Christian religion. He touches on the gracious intention of it, as a covenant of mercy to mankind; he declares God's promise of bringing the doctrines of it home to the consciences of men, by his Holy Spirit; and concludes his view of it, by mentioning the grand point of difference between it
12. and the Jewish religion—*its making a full atonement*
13. *for the sins of mankind.* He calls it, you observe, a *new covenant*; which plainly implies the abolition of the *old*.

8. Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.

This great intended change appears also from the whole economy of the Jewish tabernacle, which prefigured something that was to succeed. It appeared itself to be a mere temporary matter. The *outer part* of it, called the sanctuary, contained the golden candlestick and the table of shew-bread: the *inner part*, or the Holy of Holies, was separated from the other, and contained the golden censer, wherewith the high-priest made the yearly atonement—the ark—the golden pot with manna—Aaron's rod—the tables of the covenant—and the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; the figurative intention of all which, I shall not here particularly examine. In the first of these apartments, the priests performed their daily service; but the second was a sacred recess, shut out from all inspection, into which the high-priest alone entered, and that but once a year, to make atonement, with sacrifice, for his own sins and the sins of the people. All this ceremony was plainly intended to shew that something was yet wanting to open the Holy of Holies to all mankind: and that the various services performed, (consisting merely of observances, of no value in themselves,) were figures only of that perfect sacrifice, which should afterwards take place.

4. It appears from the text, that the ark contained these several things: whereas we are assured (1 Kings viii. 9) that it contained only the two tables of stone. *Ex 7* therefore must refer to the tabernacle.

11. 12. All these types and ceremonies, Christ hath realized; offering his own blood, instead of the Levitical sacrifice of goats and calves; entering the true Holy of Holies; and making for us, not an *annual*,
 13. but a *perpetual* atonement. And well may we suppose, if the sprinkling of the blood of animals purified the Jew from all his legal defilements; that the
 14. blood of Christ offered, through the divine appointment, without spot to God, will purge us from sin.
 15. Thus Christ becomes the mediator of a new and better covenant; redeeming by his death, and restoring to an eternal inheritance, even those who lived under the first covenant.
16. Now the death of a testator is absolutely necessary
 17. to give force to a testament. While the testator liveth, the testament or covenant is not binding.
 18. Accordingly the first testament, to make it a proper type of the second, was consecrated with blood.
 19. Thus Moses, after he had read the law, took blood,
 20. and sprinkled the people, saying, This is the blood
 21. of the testament which God hath enjoined. And
 thus

16. The word διαθήκη signifies here both a *testament* and a *covenant*. St. Paul perhaps considered a *divine covenant* as a *testament*, because of its being *unalterable*.

19. St. Paul says, that Moses sprinkled the book, as well as the people; with blood. But the passage of Moses (Exod. xxiv. 7, 8.) to which St. Paul alludes, does not mention the book as being sprinkled; either in the LXX, from which St. Paul commonly quotes; or in our translation, which is taken from the original. The vulgate is ambiguous: *Accipiens sanguinem vitulorum, ipsum quoque librum, et populum omnem aspergit.*

21. In Exod. xl. where the consecration of the tabernacle is related, blood is not specified. But, no doubt, St. Paul, who
 was

thus the tabernacle, as soon as it was erected, together with all its utensils, were sprinkled with blood; without which, indeed, the law hath no idea of re-
 mission. God thought it proper, therefore, thus to
 represent that sacred blood which was afterwards to
 be shed for the sins of mankind. And as the Holy
 of Holies is the representation of heaven; so Christ,
 the great mediator, enters a state of blessedness—
 not like the Jewish high-priest, annually with the
 blood of animals; but once for all, on this last great
 revelation of God's will, offering his own blood as a
 sacrifice for the sins of mankind. As man also is
 appointed to undergo the two great states of death
 and judgment, so the redemption of the world by
 Christ answers to these two states. He first dies for
 sin; and afterwards appears without any idea of
 atonement, merely as our judge.

The whole legal ritual then is a mere typical
 representation; nor were its sacrifices ever intended
 to make a full atonement. We prove this from the
 very nature of them. If they could have made a full

CHAP.

X.

1. 2.

was so well versed in the Jewish ceremonial, understood, that a purification through blood was meant by the words *halloving* and *sanctifying*: and accordingly Josephus expressly says, that *Moses consecrated the tabernacle, and all its utensils, with oil and blood*: *ἁγιάσας τὴν οὐκην, καὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτῆς ὀρεῖν, ἐλαίῳ καὶ τῷ αἵματι*. Antip. iii. 9.

22. In cases of inability a portion of fine flour is substituted as a sin-offering for the life of an animal. Levit. v. 11.

2. *For then they would not have ceased.* The vulgate, the Syriac, many good MSS, and even the margin of our own translation have it, *For then would they have ceased.* The negative, in our translation, entirely destroys the sense; unless, indeed, the sentence be read interrogatively.

atonement,

- atonement, what end was answered by their repetition ? The worshipper, once purged, would have been
3. freed from sin. But that was not the case. In every annual expiation, all past sins were again re-
 4. membered. In the nature of things, indeed, it is not possible that the blood of bulls, and of goats, can
 5. 6. take away sin. And in this light we consider that prophetic passage in the Psalms ; in which Christ, coming into the world, is thus represented addressing
 7. 8. 9. the Father : *Sacrifices, and offerings for sin, Thou hast rejected : but Thou hast provided a body for an offering. I embrace, O God, thy gracious designs : and agreeably to the prediction of all thy holy prophets, shall fulfil it.* Thus Christ, by substituting his own body

5. The passage from Psalm xl. from whence this verse is quoted, is singular. The words, *but a body hast thou prepared*, are in the original Hebrew, *mine ears hast thou bored*; alluding to the Jewish custom of boring the ears of slaves. Our translation of the Psalms renders it totally without any meaning at all ; *mine ears hast thou opened*.—The interpretation is, that Christ is represented as submitting to the will of his Father, with all the obedience of a willing slave.—But still how comes it, that St. Paul, instead of saying, *mine ears hast thou bored*, says, *a body hast thou prepared me*?—This is singular ; but the truth is, the apostle, instead of quoting from the original Hebrew, quotes from the septuagint ; which renders the original Hebrew very happily, as the apostle has quoted it. Slaves were always considered, both by the Jews and Greeks, as *mere bodies*. Thus Raguel gave Tobias half his slaves, cattle, and money—*σώματα, καὶ κτήνη, καὶ ἀργύριον* ; and thus the slaves of the men of Sichem are called *τα σώματα*. See also Rev. xviii. 13. Many instances also occur in heathen writers. The LXX therefore, by a very happy interpretation, translate the act of *boring the ear*, or appropriating a slave, by the word *σώμα*, which includes the true sense ; and *here* signifies both the *body offered*, and the *form* (the *μορφή δευς*, Phil. ii. 7.) in which our blessed Lord appeared. Some translate the word *κατεργασω* marked, instead of *prepared* ; and so make it allude to the brands fixed on slaves. See Saurin's serm. vi. j

in the room of the offerings, and sacrifices of the law, plainly establishes one on the abolition of the other.—By this holy sacrifice then we are justified; 10.
 giving up every idea of justification by the law—not 11.
 trusting in an earthly high-priest, and the atonement of temple-sacrifices—but in a high-priest, who having 12.
 offered himself a sacrifice for sin once for all, sat down for ever on the right hand of God; triumph- 13. 14.
 ing over death, and making a full atonement for all his faithful servants. For this is the sense of the 15. 16.
 prophecy of Jeremiah, which I quoted above. Having spoken of the *new covenant* which God was about to make, and the new laws he was about to establish, the prophet adds, that in this new cove- 17.
 nant, a complete atonement should be made for the sins of mankind. In fine then, if you allow the force 18.
 of this prophecy thus far, you must conclude farther, that the offerings and sacrifices of the temple-service are now rendered entirely useless.

Since, therefore, my brethren, we have thus a 19. 20.
 new and living way opened to us into the Holy of Holies by the blood of Christ; and since we have 21.
 an eternal high-priest presiding there, making constant intercession for us, let us draw near with full 22.
 faith and assurance of his mercy. Let us reject all

15. 16. See Heb. viii. 10. 12.

18. Whoever examines seriously St. Paul's application of the Jewish rites of atonement, to the death of Christ, in several parts of this epistle, but especially in some of the foregoing passages, must either, I think, deny the authenticity of these passages, or believe the doctrine of the atonement.

- dependence on legal purification, and lay the stress
 23. on the purification of the heart. Let us steadily persevere in the profession of our faith; raising our
 24. minds with the promises we have received. Let no prejudices against our brethren subsist among us; but let us shew our charity by an unreserved communication of kindness. Of one thing let me particularly
 25. remind you: continue regularly your Christian assemblies, and return not to the temple-worship. Even in a worldly light it is prudent; for a dreadful calamity, you may assure yourselves, hangs over this
 26. 27. unhappy country.—But the great point to be considered is, that if you apostatize, you reject the only means of drawing you to the truth which God hath thought proper to promulge. You give up the sacrifice of Christ, and place yourselves among those, who having now no farther means of conversion,
 28. must await the just indignation of God. Will that
 29. God, think you, who punished every transgression of the Mosaic law with so much rigour, see without offence the stronger evidence of the gospel treated with contempt—the Son of God despised—his great atonement rejected—and all the miraculous powers of
 30. the Holy Spirit set at nought? Remember that awful sentence, *Vengeance is mine; I will repay*, saith the Lord. And again: *The Lord shall judge his people*. Consider what it is to fall into the hands of a Being
 31. whose attribute is *eternal justice*. Recollect the con-

licts you endured after your first conversion—the re- 32.
proaches and persecutions you underwent—and your 33. 34.
steady adherence to me and others of the apostles of
Christ; suffering the loss of your worldly possessions
through faith in an eternal inheritance.

Cast not away, therefore, that faith which is the
earnest of this eternal inheritance. Shew yourselves 35.
God's faithful servants; trust him for your reward; 36.
and be not discouraged if you are not immediately
delivered. In God's good time you shall receive 37. 38.
assistance. Remember the words of the prophet: *He*
that cometh, will come; and will not tarry: that is,
they who obey him may depend on his assistance.
And immediately after, *the just shall live by faith*.
But he who renounces his faith, must remember also,
that he renounces the blessings annexed to it. I
should be sorry to suppose, that any of you, my 39.
brethren, are of that number. Let me rather sup- CHAP.
pose you among those who consider your faith as XI.
the only ground of your salvation. Faith is still 1. 2.
what

38. Hab. ii. 3, 4.—Beza held the doctrine of *assurance*: and
in order to accommodate this passage to his own opinion, he
translates *καὶ ἐὰν υποβιβληται*, (to which the foregoing clause is the
nominative case) by introducing a new nominative of his own,
at si quis se subduxerit.

1. There is little doubt, I think, but the *faith* here meant, is
that *faith in the promises of a Messiah*, which strongly possessed all
the serious part of mankind in the early ages of the world.
Through this faith we suppose Abel offered his sacrifice to God.
Noah, who was a type of Christ, could not be ignorant, one
should suppose, of what he himself represented. Abraham, to
whom the promise of a Redeemer was renewed, most probably
had a clear idea, in all his typical transactions, of the nature of
that

- what it always has been through the whole history of your forefathers. It may be called the realizing of our hopes, as nothing can be the object of our hopes which is not first the object of our faith. It may be called also the evidence of such things as our knowledge cannot reach. Through faith we are
- 3.

that promise. The patriarchs, too, acted under the same impression; and Moses shewed, in all his actions, that the reproach of *Christ was greater riches to him than the treasures of Egypt*. Under the influence of this promise also all the worthies of Israel acted—their judges administered justice—their heroes fought—their martyrs died—and their prophets predicted future events.—On a supposition also of this general faith in the promises of God, (which, no doubt, were more or less clear to different persons,) we account for several crimes in the bible-history which cannot well be accounted for on any other supposition: at least, we cannot account for Moses's mentioning several of them, unless with a view to shew how strongly the promise of a Saviour wrought in the early ages of the world. We follow the clue which St. Paul has given us, who mentions some of the judges of Israel as acting under the influence of this faith, though they were certainly guilty of very unwarrantable actions.—On the birth of Cain, Eve declared, *she had gotten a man from the Lord*; supposing, most probably, that Cain was the promised Saviour. Cain, adopting, as is also probable, his mother's opinion, and finding Abel more favoured by God than *he* was, might ground his jealousy against his brother on this circumstance.—To a jealousy of the same kind we may refer the enmity between Jacob and Esau: and the machinations of Joseph's brethren, who might think him, as the child of Rachel, and their father's favourite, the promised seed.—To this desire also of giving birth to the promised seed, we may refer several of the accounts of polygamy, and concubinage, which we meet with in the bible-history. Abraham's intercourse with Hagar was plainly of this kind. Even the story of Lot's daughters may be referred to this source. As far as appears (see Gen. xix. 8.) they were virtuous women: but being now shut out from all mankind, and being utterly deprived of the great hope which possessed all the women of those days, who believed in the promises of God, they were led into this abominable action. It appears evidently from the face of the story, that they had no wish but that of having offspring: and that they rather gloried in what they had done, seems plain from the names they gave their children, which signify the mode of their birth,

assured,

assured, that the works of creation were formed by the word of God. It was faith in the promises of God that gave a value to the sacrifice of Abel, and made it an example to future times. Cain's, being not of the expiatory kind, was not founded in faith. It was the same faith that carried Enoch to heaven without his suffering the pains of mortality. He pleased God: and we know there is no other way of pleasing him but by a steady and active faith in his providence and promises. It was faith that saved Noah and his family in the ark; and infidelity that destroyed the rest of mankind. It was faith which carried Abraham into an unknown country, where he dwelt with his posterity, resting on the general promise of God for a better inheritance. Through faith also Sarah, in her old age, bore a son; from which child of faith sprang the whole people of Israel.—All the eminent patriarchs died before the completion of the promises they had received: but having full faith in them, they considered themselves in this world only as on a journey, passing to their heavenly home. For if they had regarded only temporal things, their prospects lay fairer in the

4. Abel's sacrifice was a bloody one (see Gen. iv. 4.) and therefore of the *expiatory kind*. Cain's was only of the fruits of the earth, for which God reproves him; and points out to him what he ought to have done. *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, a SIN-OFFERING* (for so it should be translated) *lieth at the door*. Gen. iv. 7.

14. Πατρίδα ἐπιζητοῦσι, says the original; which we translate coldly, *They seek a country*. But πατρίς signifies, not a country, but our *native country*—the place where our ancestors have lived.

country

16. country they had left. But it is plain they had better hopes. Therefore God professed himself to be their protector, and prepared for them
17. 18. a mansion of future happiness. By faith Abraham offered Isaac; though in him he expected a completion of all the promises which God had made him.
19. But as, at first, he had miraculously received a son, he concluded, that God could as easily after death
20. raise him again to life. Through faith in the promises of God, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau: and
21. afterwards Jacob, when he was dying in Egypt, blessed the two sons of Joseph. Joseph also, on his death-bed, predicted the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt; and in testimony of his faith, ordered his own bones to be carried into the land of
22. Canaan.—The extraordinary preservation of Moses was owing to an act of faith in his parents: the promises of God weighed more with them than the threatenings of the king. Through the same principle also, Moses himself, when he came to years of discretion, renounced all connections with the court
23. of Pharaoh; and chose rather to partake of the afflictions of his own people, than to enjoy the pleasures
24. of a sinful life. He had full trust in the promises of God; and preferred the hard duties to which they

21. *Leaning on the top of his staff.* Thus it is rendered in the septuagint, from which the sacred writers commonly quote: but in the Hebrew, it is *bowled*, or *leaned on his bed*; which, considering the patriarch was then dying, seems to be the better sense.

26. *Esteeming the reproach of Christ*; that is, the reproaches to which a belief in the Messiah led him.

led

led him, before all the softness and luxury of Egypt. His faith carried him forward to an expected Mes-
 siah; and in this confidence, he conducted the Is-
 raelites out of Egypt, and despised the wrath of
 Pharaoh. Through faith, he kept the first passover;
 and through the sprinkling of blood, averted the de-
 stroying angel from his people: and lastly, through
 faith, he passed the red sea, while the Egyptians pur-
 suing him were destroyed.—In the sequel of the
 Israelitish history, Joshua was enabled to throw down
 the walls of Jericho through faith—by which, also,
 Rahab was saved in the midst of a general massacre.
 —But it would be endless to enumerate all the
 champions, and all the prophets and martyrs of the
 bible-history; and enter into all their actions and
 sufferings, through this great virtue.—Thus faith
 hath been the leading principle, from the earliest
 times to these: and though *we* have seen the com-
 pletion of those promises, which *they* only saw at a
 distance; yet God hath left sufficient room for the
 exercise of our faith, also, in the duties of our more
 perfect covenant; that we might partake with them
 in the same blessed reward of faith and holiness.

Under the influence, then, of such numerous ex-
 amples, in the exercise of this great virtue, let us lay

CHAP.
 XII.
 1. 2.

37. *ἐπιπειρασθέντες*, were tempted. The meaning is commonly supposed to be, *they were tempted to renounce their faith by threatenings*. Some reject the expression entirely, as it is not found in several MSS; while others again suppose the right reading was *ἐπιπυρσθέντες*, they were burnt alive.

Chap. xii. The beginning of this chapter should be read and studied by all who are in affliction.

- aside every incumbrance, and run with patience our Christian course; setting chiefly before us, as the point to aim at, the example of our blessed Lord, who, through a life of sorrow and distress, endured
3. with joy for sinful man, entered eternal glory. When you feel yourselves, therefore, fainting in this great conflict, renew your endeavours, by considering what accumulated misery your great Leader under-
 4. went for your sakes.—Besides, your sufferings have yet been light, compared with those of such holy men as have offered up their lives for religion. Your sufferings have yet only been chastisements for sin.
 5. Have you forgotten the exhortations of scripture, which speak to all suffering sinners: *My son, take patiently the chastening of the Lord; and let it urge you to serve him with greater diligence: for the correction of the Lord is an instance of his love.* By
 7. 8. chastising you, therefore, God shews himself your father. It is a fatherly duty. To be without chastisement, would argue you not to be under the discipline of a father. And if we respect an earthly
 9. father for his attention to his children; much more ought we to reverence our heavenly father, who does
 10. not, as the earthly father, correct us on worldly motives; but for the benefit of our immortal souls.
 11. For the present, no doubt, every degree of correction is painful: but happy is he who can consider it
 12. as an exercise of his virtue. Lift up, therefore, your

feeble hands, and bend your stiffened knees; and 13.
 amend your faults under the correcting hand of your
 heavenly father. Live peaceably with men, and pi- 14.
 ously with God; and you shall be inheritors of God's
 holy kingdom. But take care that you renounce 15.
 not, in any degree, the faith you have received.
 Take care not to mix the doctrines of the world with 16. 17.
 the truths of religion. Remember the case of Esau,
 who, for a morsel of food, sold his birth-right. He
 found it impossible to recover that privilege, after he
 had once lost it: and it is justly to be apprehended,
 that all apostates may bring themselves into the same
 dreadful circumstances.—Much more guilty would 18. 19. 20.
 the Christian apostate be than the Jewish. The law 21.
 of Moses was given with all those circumstances of
 terrific grandeur, which struck its observers with
 fear. Even Moses himself was terrified with the awful
 appearance of that wonderful transaction. Whereas 22. 23.
 you, instead of trembling at the bottom of a moun-
 tain, flaming with fire from heaven, are admitted (if
 you comply with the conditions of the gospel) to the
 blessed society of heaven, consisting of saints and

17. *And found no place of repentance*—meaning his father Isaac's repentance or change of mind. See a note on Matt. iii. 2.

18. *The mount that might be touched*. I cannot find there are any copies authorising that reading, which, one should suppose, the sense requires—*The mount that might not be touched*, namely Horeb. If we take the expression as we read it, we must consider it as barely expressing an *earthly mount*—a mount that was the *object of our senses*—that *might be touched*—in opposition to the heavenly one.

21. It is supposed, that St. Paul alludes in this passage about Moses to the LXX translation of Deut. ix. 19. *ἐκφοβήσας ἑαυτὸν διὰ τοὺς θυμῶν*.

24. angels—even to the presence of God himself—and to Jesus, the mediator of this blessed covenant, whose blood did not cry, like that of Abel, for vengeance; but called down mercy.
25. Take care, therefore, that you reject not so gracious a call: for if they who apostatized from the Mosaic law—a law delivered only by the mediation of man, were punished with death; what punishment do they
26. deserve, who reject the evidence of the Son of God from heaven? That voice, which at first shook the earth, at the giving of the law, we are assured by the prophet, shall once more shake, not the earth only, but heaven itself: that is, the law, which was but a temporary institution, is now fulfilled in the gospel,
27. which adds heaven to the scheme.—There is something farther observable in this prophecy. The expression *once more* indicates a change; and that the former institution should be superseded by the latter.
28. —We have now, therefore, an institution, which fully enables us to pay that true worship to God
29. which he expects; but, at the same time, we must

24. *That speaketh better things than that of Abel.*—Some commentators expound the blood of Abel to be, not his own blood, but the blood of his sacrifice: which, as the rite was then first instituted, they consider as representing sacrifice in general. According to that interpretation, the passage means, that the sacrifice of Christ was more efficient than the sacrifice of Abel.—But I think this interpretation both cold and forced. Besides, the apostle seems to have exhausted the subject of the excellence of Christ's sacrifice in the 9th and 10th chapters, and is now speaking of his mercy. Lastly, the apostle seems to have a reference to Gen. iv. 10, where it is said, *Thy brother's blood cryeth to me from the ground.*

26. Alluding to Haggai ii. 6, 7.

remember,

remember, that in proportion to the greatness of the advantage, a penalty is annexed to our disobedience.

CHAP
XIII.

I shall conclude my epistle, with inculcating a few practical duties.—Among these, let charity take the lead. Make no distinction between Jew and Gentile converts. As there is often a resort of strangers among you, be ready to shew your hospitality to all. The patriarchs often entertained angels: you may often entertain saints.—Forget not those who are in a state of suffering for the gospel; whether they are in bonds, or in any other affliction; remembering, that, in these times, you are all liable to the same trials.—Marriage is an honourable state; but every other connection between the sexes is absolutely forbidden.—Be moderate in all your desires, and satisfied with what you have; trusting in God's promise to provide for you and protect you.—Remember with affection and zeal, the instruction and holy example of those first professors of the Christian faith, who have gone before you, and laid down their lives for its sake: and keep al-

2. *Some have entertained angels unawares.* This is rather intended as an *encomium* on hospitality, than as a *motive* to it.—The Indian-Bramins turn this sentiment into a *motive*; instructing their disciples, that superior beings often descend in likeness of ordinary travellers, and reward such as shew kindness to them.

7. It is rather supposed that St. Paul, in this passage, alludes to their dead than living pastors: and that the present tense stands for the imperfect. He mentions their living pastors, ver. 17. See Pyle, Doddridge, &c.

- ways in memory the great end which inspired them
8. 9. —the everlasting promises of our blessed Lord : and let these promises keep you steady in your faith, and in the grace of God ; which you will find more productive of happiness than the ceremonies of the law
10. ever were. The Jew, indeed, while he continues such, cannot partake of the Christian altar. By his
11. own law, he cannot. The bodies of those beasts which were sacrificed for the expiation of sin, were carried without the camp, and burnt ; but never
12. eaten. As Christ fulfilled that type, he was put to death without the city. Of his body, therefore, the
13. Jew, while he continues such, cannot partake. But
14. let us Christians follow him without the gate ; bearing patiently every reproach which the Jew can lay
15. upon us ; not considering this earthly Jerusalem, but heaven, as our home.—Through Christ, then, let us offer up our praises and thanksgivings to God ;
16. always remembering, that the best sacrifice is a holy
17. life.—Pay all proper respect to your spiritual pastors, who watch over you. God grant they may give an account of their ministry among you with joy ! Their sorrow will certainly bespeak your un-
18. 19. profitableness under their instruction.—Let us be the subject of your constant prayers ; particularly that we may soon be delivered from our enemies. However ill-treated we are, I hope our preaching and conversation have ever been sincere and inoffensive.

11. See Levit. xvi. 27.

May the God of peace, who raised up Christ from the dead, accepting his blood as an atonement for sin, assist you in living obediently to his will, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom be glory and honour, for ever and ever, Amen!

I hope you will receive the exhortation of this short letter with that kindness with which it is written: and as Timothy is now at liberty, I shall be able soon to accompany him in a visit to you.

Salute all the elders of the church in our name; and accept the salutation of all the brethren in Italy.

Grace be with you all. Amen!

END OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

THIS epistle stands foremost of the seven epistles which are called *catholic*, from their addressing no particular church, but the *whole body* of believers; though one or two of them are addressed to particular persons.—It was written by James, the son of Alpheus, sometimes called James the less, or James the just. He is supposed also to have been the first bishop of Jerusalem, and is mentioned in scripture as our *Lord's brother*; which probably means only a near relation. The other James, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, suffered martyrdom very early in the Christian æra*.

In this epistle, the apostle first encourages his Christian readers to bear with patience the trials they should meet with; and consider them as sent from God; and improve them to the purposes of religion. He presses upon his readers meekness and gentleness to each other, as the test of

* See Acts xii. 2.

their

their sincerity; and highly blames all partiality of behaviour between man and man, as wholly inconsistent with Christian charity. He shews that faith itself, without charity, is of no avail—and enforces his doctrine by several examples. He dwells next on the government of the tongue: and in the beginning of the fourth chapter, addresses himself, as is generally supposed, to the *unbelieving Jews*. But, at the eleventh verse of the same chapter, returning again to his Christian readers, he taxes them with too much worldly-mindedness; and strictly enjoins them, as he began, to be patient and forbearing under persecution. He then mentions the practice of swearing, (to which, from Jewish custom, they were probably much addicted,) and strictly forbids it: concluding with an earnest exhortation to endeavour to draw sinners to repentance.

The authenticity of this epistle seems never to have been questioned in early times. Indeed, it could not; for it is found in the Syriac version; which is supposed to have been made as early as the beginning of the second century. But it is very remarkable that Luther took offence at it; and wished to exclude it from the sacred canon. The apostle's idea of justification, it is imagined, was the stumbling-block. It is said, however, by Wolfius and others, that Luther lived to change his opinion.

GENERAL EPISTLE

O F

ST. JAMES.

CHAP.

I.

JAMES, a servant of God and Christ, to all Jewish Christians, wherever dispersed—greeting!

Consider it, my brethren, as matter rather of joy
 than of grief, that you are exercised with various
 trials; as by these you learn submission to the divine
 will. When your hearts are truly formed by this
 holy exercise, you have attained the perfection of
 religion. Through human power, indeed, this holy
 temper is not to be attained. It is fervent prayer
 to God, that will draw his assistance on the pious
 endeavours of his servants. But your prayers must
 be founded in faith. The unsteady Christian must
 never expect his petitions should reach the throne of

1. The twelve tribes still existed, at least in foreign parts, as may be learned from Josephus and others; though we read only of two who returned *in form* from captivity. See Lardner's Cred. p. i. chap. iii.

God.

9. God. Our holy religion furnishes proper consolation to every station of life. Are we in a low condition?
10. 11. Let us consider to what a heavenly state we are exalted. Are we reduced from better circumstances? God hath providentially removed us from a multitude of temptations, which might have oppressed us; and has, at worst, only taken from us what, in course,
12. we must presently give up. Bear the trials, then, of this world, therefore, with pious resignation; and look forward to that reward which awaits your perseverance.
13. Nor let any man pretend to excuse himself, by saying God threw temptations in his way. It is impious to suppose that a pure Being can be the author of sin. Every man's sins are certainly on his own head. He suffers his lusts to entice him. Hence sin is produced; hence death came into the
14. 15. world; and hence man's lost condition. Do not then, my brethren, fall into so pernicious an error;
16. but consider God, unchangeable in his nature, as
17. the author only of good. Through his free grace he created us. Through his free grace he hath re-
18. deemed us. Under a sense, therefore, of God's goodness to *us*, let us behave kindly to *each other*. Let us be humble-minded—open to conviction—and particularly careful not to mix heat and animosity with our religious differences. The passionate
- 20.

13. God's being the author of evil, has been an apology for wickedness, we see, ever since the establishment of Christianity.

advocate never advances the cause of religion. Lay
 aside, therefore, every degree of bitterness. That holy 21.
 gospel which is to save your souls, can be received
 only in the spirit of meekness. Remember, that re- 22.
 ligion does not consist in hearing the truth, but in
 practising it. Every thing else is self-deceit. The 23. 24.
 gospel is the great rule of life and manners; and he
 who does not use it as such, is like a man who looks
 merely in a glass for curiosity; but leaves it instantly,
 without examining what defects in his appearance he
 should rectify. He only can receive any advantage 25.
 from the gospel, who examines it, so as to govern
 himself by its precepts. Nor must he consider his 26.
 religion as sincere, if it lead him into uncharitable 27.
 and bitter language; instead of those benevolent ac-
 tions, and that heavenly conversation, in which re-
 ligion so much consists.

CHAP.

II.

Besides the animosities which, I fear, may prevail
 among you, I must take notice of another thing, 1. 2.
 which is exceedingly wrong; and that is your par-
 tiality to people in higher stations. If dress influence
 you, on one hand; or mean apparel, on the other; 3. 4.

4. It is not easy to say in what manner the apostle supposes this partiality to have wrought: but it is probable he means in their *judicial decisions*. The word *synagogue*, in the original, (ver. 2.) rather means *a court of justice*, than an assembly met to worship God. Impartiality is the characteristic of the one, and devotion of the other. The Talmudists expressly say, that if a poor man and a rich man plead together, they must both either sit or stand. Beza says, that the expression, which we translate, *judges of evil thoughts*, is a Hebraism; and therefore he translates it, *judices, male ratiocinantes—judges who reason ill.*

- you certainly guide your decisions by a very unchristian rule. Consider, my brethren, how your almighty Father acts. Doth he make any difference between the poor and the rich? Are they not all
6. equal heirs of his promises? Yet these poor you have despised; notwithstanding the rich are they
 7. who chiefly oppress you—and profane that holy
 8. 9. 10. Name which you revere. That most excellent rule of your religion, to *love your neighbour as yourself*, teaches you a different practice; and strongly opposes all this unjust partiality. For there is such a connection between all the duties of religion; that he who lives in the known breach of one, would break any of the rest, if he were under the same temptation.
 11. The general precept of loving our neighbour, equally enjoins every duty to him. He, therefore, who is guilty of one offence against his neighbour, would as
 12. readily be guilty of another. But let me hope that you regulate your actions, not by Jewish prejudices, which make exceptions to persons; but by that equal law of Christianity, which prescribes universal
 13. love. The unmerciful and malicious man, you know, by the whole tenor of the gospel, is laying up for himself future mischief: while mercy to man, will certainly meet a return of mercy from God.

11. Some translate *it*, *be*; and refer it to the *lawgiver*. Others translate it, *it*; and refer it to the *royal law*. Both senses are good. The latter is well explained by Bp. Sherlock in the 13th sermon of his first volume.—The reader will find an ingenious explication of this verse in the first volume of Bp. Porteus's sermons.

Nay farther, be assured that, without works of
 charity, even the great Christian principle of faith is
 of no avail. Can faith alone, do you suppose, save
 you? See how it appears in common life. A per-
 son in distress presents himself to you. You tell
 him, you are fully convinced of his unhappy condi-
 tion, and heartily wish him relief. But is your be-
 lief of his distress of any advantage to him, if it
 carry you no farther than good wishes? Just in the
 same way, faith, unaccompanied by good works,
 signifies nothing. And it is an undoubted truth, that
 there is no way of shewing the soundness of your
 faith, but by the purity of your lives.—Nor is
 this any new doctrine. Faith, under the Jewish re-
 ligion, had just the same tendency as under the
 Christian. If the Jew merely believed in God, he
 did no more than the devils do, who believe and
 tremble. Such a faith, unaccompanied by works,
 was dead. But Abraham's faith was evidenced by
 works, when he offered up Isaac on the altar. Was
 it not this mode of faith which shewed his sincerity?
 Was it not through this he was justified? And was
 it not this which gained him the honourable title of
 the Friend of God? You see, then, that by works
 a man is justified; and not by faith only.—The
 case

23. Gen. xv. 6. 2 Chron. xx. 7. Isa. xli. 8.

23. It is remarkable, that St. Paul quotes this very text (Ro-
 mans iv. 3.) to prove that Abraham was *justified by faith*: which
 St. James produces to shew, *that he was justified by works, and not
 by faith only.*

25. This is the third time in which *Rahab the harlot* is men-
 tioned in the New Testament. The reason why she is thus par-
 ticularized

- case of Rahab was the same. If she had professed her faith only in God, it had been nothing: but she shewed the sincerity of it by her works—by receiving and dismissing the spies. Thus, as the body without the soul is dead; so the Jewish faith formerly, and the Christian faith now, are dead also; unless actuated by that enlivening spirit, which draws faith into action.

CHAP.

III.

I.

- If, then, the profession of faith alone be not sufficient to make a Christian, you may be assured, it is much less so to make a teacher. Let a man be careful, therefore, in taking upon himself this office. By misleading others, he contracts double guilt. We have all our failings; but the religious Christian is so far from abusing the use of speech by indiscreet teaching, that he is careful, even in his common conversation. A strict care over his words, he knows, is one of the best preservatives against sin. He

ticularized (for the apostle might have found many other instances of faith) may be first to shew the eminence of *her faith*, which distinguished itself in believing in the true God, amidst a nation of idolaters. Secondly, because David, as is commonly understood, was descended from her, and afterwards Christ. — Many interpreters, however, do not allow that she ought to be stigmatized by the name of *harlot*; but find the word, which is so translated, may mean a person who took hire for the entertainment of guests at her house. The Jewish spies, therefore, applied to her merely for lodging.

1. The Jewish zealots greatly affected the office of teachers. — St. Paul, in his epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. i. 7.) rebukes these forward teachers: and again, in Romans (ii. 19.) St. James uses the same language here.

2. The word *πλάνη* properly signifies *we trip*. The general course of our life, says Dr. Barrow, is called in scripture *a way*: the particular passages of it, *steps*: a regular course of right acting, *walking uprightly*: and when we act amiss, (*πλάνη*) *we trip*.

who

who can govern his tongue, may be said to govern his life; just as the bit guides the horse, and the helm the ship. Though the tongue is a small instrument, its power is great. How mischievous a flame is often raised by a spark! Such a spark is a word. It may be kindled in hell; and set fire to the world. Full of deadly poison, it is more pernicious than serpents—more furious than the fiercest wild beast. How shocking is it to consider, that that tongue, which was given us to bless God, is employed often in cursing our fellow-creatures. Such contradictions appear in no part of the creation but in man. We never see the fountain produce sweet water and bitter; nor the tree bear different kinds of fruit. Whoever, therefore, among you pretends to real wisdom, let him shew it in a restrained, gentle, and holy conversation; assuring himself, that where strife and emulation prevail, there may be boasting of wisdom; but it is certainly of that kind which springs from worldly and sensual motives: its fruit is mischief and confusion. Whereas heavenly wisdom is pure and gentle, and open to con-

6. The tongue, says the text, is ο κόσμος της αδικίας; which we translate, *a world of iniquity*. Ellner (in loc.) gives this expression a singular and ingenious turn: the tongue, says he, *is the adorning of unrighteousness*: alluding to the many glosses and excuses it is apt to make for wickedness. But I think this interpretation more ingenious than just.

7. Δαμάσκειν might more properly be rendered *subdued*, than *tamed*. All kinds of animals have certainly been subdued by man; but cannot well be said to have been *tamed* or *reclaimed*.

17. viction ; and leads to all that holiness which possesses the mind of every peaceable man.

CHAP.

IV.

1. And here, my brethren, let me remind you of that calamitous state to which your nation is now reduced, by your seditions and quarrels. Those bad passions which mislead your tongues, mislead
2. 3. also your actions. Your whole lives are given up to temporal views, which lead you to violence and mischief: and though you still preserve an outward form of worship ; yet your petitions, being wholly void of true devotion, are unacceptable to
4. God. You apostates from the truth ! know you not that he who is the friend of the world is the
5. 6. enemy of God ? Know you not, from various parts of scripture, that the spirit of the world leadeth to wickedness—that God giveth us the grace to oppose it ; and that he giveth this grace to the humble,
7. 8. 9. 10. but resisteth the proud ?——Lay aside, then, all worldly-mindedness : resist the devil : turn truly to God : humble yourselves before him : wash away your sins by repentance : and God will open to you the gates of mercy.

2. Bowyer conjectures, that $\phi\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ should be read $\phi\sigma\delta\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon$; *you envy*.

3. *Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it on your lusts.* A man ought well to consider (says Plato) when he prays, lest he deceive himself ; and ask for evil when he expects good. See Alcib. ii. sub fin.

6. This epistle is supposed to have been written about the year sixty-two ; when the wild and frantic madness of the Jews, in various places, was drawing upon them apace those dreadful calamities which soon overwhelmed them. This part of the epistle therefore, of course, must be considered as addressed to the unbelieving part of the Jewish nation.

And

And now, my brethren in Christ, let me next
 address myself to *you*. Though you have accepted
 the grace of God, yet be not harsh in condemning
 those who are not so happy. This is making your-
 selves judges of God's laws, instead of being hum-
 ble observers of them. Do you pretend to issue
 that sentence which can come only from the great
 Lawgiver himself? Look nearer home. I find,
 even among *you*, too much of this worldly spirit.
 You depend, in your worldly schemes, too much
 on yourselves, and on your own prudence, not con-
 sidering the uncertainty of all human things; which
 points out to you the necessity of depending on
 God. This is a kind of confidence, my brethren,
 which springs from an evil root: and in you, who
 know better, it is certainly so much worse. You
 will soon be spectators of that misery, and distress,
 which is coming upon the powerful leaders of
 the Jews. What will be the end of all their
 wealth? They have hoarded it up as an increase of
 their distress at this time. Their frauds and injustice
 will then rise against them. The cry of their ini-
 quities will reach to heaven; and of those pleasure-

11.

12.

13.

14.

15. 16.

17.

CHAP.
V.

1. 2. 3.

4.

5.

11. The resuming the address here to *Christians* is not directly specified, yet it seems to be understood; and so it is interpreted by the best commentators.

3. The *last days* is often an evangelical expression to denote the dissolution of the Jewish government, on the establishment of Christianity.

5. Some interpreters suppose the apostle here means their surfeiting themselves with pleasure, as beasts were fatted for sacrifice.

- able lives, which have been spent as in a heathen
6. riot on a day of sacrifice. But, above all, for their having put to death the Messiah, are they chiefly punished with this dreadful calamity.
 7. Be you, however, my brethren, (persecuted and distressed as you are,) patient and resigned; waiting for that happy time, which will finish all your afflictions. See with what labour the husbandman toils through the year, in expectation of his harvest. And shall not you live in patient hope of that happiness which is to last through all eternity? Strengthen your faith, then, with this great view of
 9. the glory of God. Lay aside all resentment against your persecutors, (which, in every light, is irreligious,) and leave them in the hands of almighty
 10. 11. justice. Take the prophets as examples of suffering. Read the account of that holy sufferer Job. There

6. 7. The address likewise in this chapter seems to be made to two different sorts of people—hardened Jews—and Jewish converts. In the 6th verse they seem to be taxed with the death of Christ—in the 7th they are addressed as persons who ought to be patient unto the coming of the Lord.—The expression, *And he doth not resist you*, is commonly understood interrogatively, and may therefore be rendered as I have explained it.—Some, however, are inclined to believe, from the internal evidence of this epistle, that it was addressed only to those Jews who professed Christianity. Had the apostle written to unbelieving Jews, say they, he would have endeavoured, one should think, to persuade them to embrace the christian faith. He would have testified the resurrection of Christ; and brought arguments from the prophets to convince them that he was the Messiah. But nothing of this appears. His design, therefore, seems only to build up those in the christian practice who had already embraced the christian faith.—I leave these arguments to the reader's judgment.

see the goodness of the Lord, in all the distresses of his patient servants; and how graciously he reaches out his hand to sustain them.—As I exhort you thus to lay aside all persecuting thoughts, let me exhort you also to lay aside that common Jewish practice of swearing. Swearing in common conversation, either by God, or any of his creatures, is utterly forbidden by Christianity. 12.

Finally, my brethren, turn every circumstance of life to your spiritual advantage. Are any in distress? Let them pray to God. Are they happy? Let them praise him. Are they under God's cor- 13. 14. 15. 16.

15. The persons here mentioned are such as (1 Cor. xi. 30.) had drawn upon themselves God's displeasure for their sins. These were visitations known in the early ages of the church. We read that death, in some cases, was inflicted; and St. Paul sometimes threatens his back sliding converts, that he will *visit them with a rod*.—Such cases, however, must not be drawn into modern example. The elders of the church may still, and ought still to pray with sick people: but we have no authority to suppose the prayer of faith will restore them to health.—I know no greater source of fanaticism than the application of apostolic powers to modern times.—As to the *anointing with oil* here mentioned, it was certainly practised in the ancient church. We read of it also in Mark (vi. 13.). But the stress is not laid on the *oil*; but on the *prayer of faith*. Our Saviour in many of his miracles used *external signs*; and for the same reason *anointing* might be used, which was customary among the Jews. Be it however as it may, there is a great difference between anointing a sick person, in order to his recovery, and anointing him professedly *when he is dying*, as a mean of sanctification. See a note on Mark vi. 13.—It may be added, that anointing with oil, and using certain muttering words, was a sort of charm among the Jews. To this custom St. James may allude; as if he had said, How much better is it, instead of those incantations, which are often used, to use *the prayer of faith*. See Lightfoot's Heb. and Talm. Exer. v. ii. p. 162.

- recting hand for their sins? Let them send for the elders of the church; who, receiving their confession, and resolutions of obedience, will pray over them: and the prayers of the faithful shall raise them again to health; and their sins shall be forgiven. Prayer is our most effectual intercourse with God. On the prayers of Elijah, who was a mere man like us, the heavens were shut up; and rain fell not for more than three years. On his
- 17.
- 18.

16. *The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* This passage the papist thinks very authoritative with regard to the worship of saints. He argues, à fortiori, that if the prayers of a good man avail much, the prayers of a saint or an angel must avail more. — But he ought to consider, that although the prayers and intercessions of a *good man* are allowed; and indeed enjoined, all prayers to angels are totally forbidden (see Col. ii. 18.); and the reason is obvious; we cannot pray to a saint or angel, without ascribing to him the prerogative of God, in hearing our prayers, which, in fact, makes an act of prayer an act of idolatry. We request *the prayers of men* on no such reasons. We do not pray to men, but for them. God may have enjoined prayer for our fellow-creatures for own sakes. It certainly tends greatly to meliorate the heart; and, in the apostle's language, to *provoke unto love and good works*. Heb. x. 24. — *Effectual prayer availeth much*, as in our translation, is a contradiction. *Ενεργημα*, means rather *energetic*. — It may be farther remarked on this text, that it does not so immediately lead us to make confession to the elders of the church, as to direct a kind of spiritual intercourse of confession and prayer among private Christians. Both kinds of confession may be highly useful on many occasions; but neither affords a sufficient foundation for the extent to which the Romanists carry auricular confession.

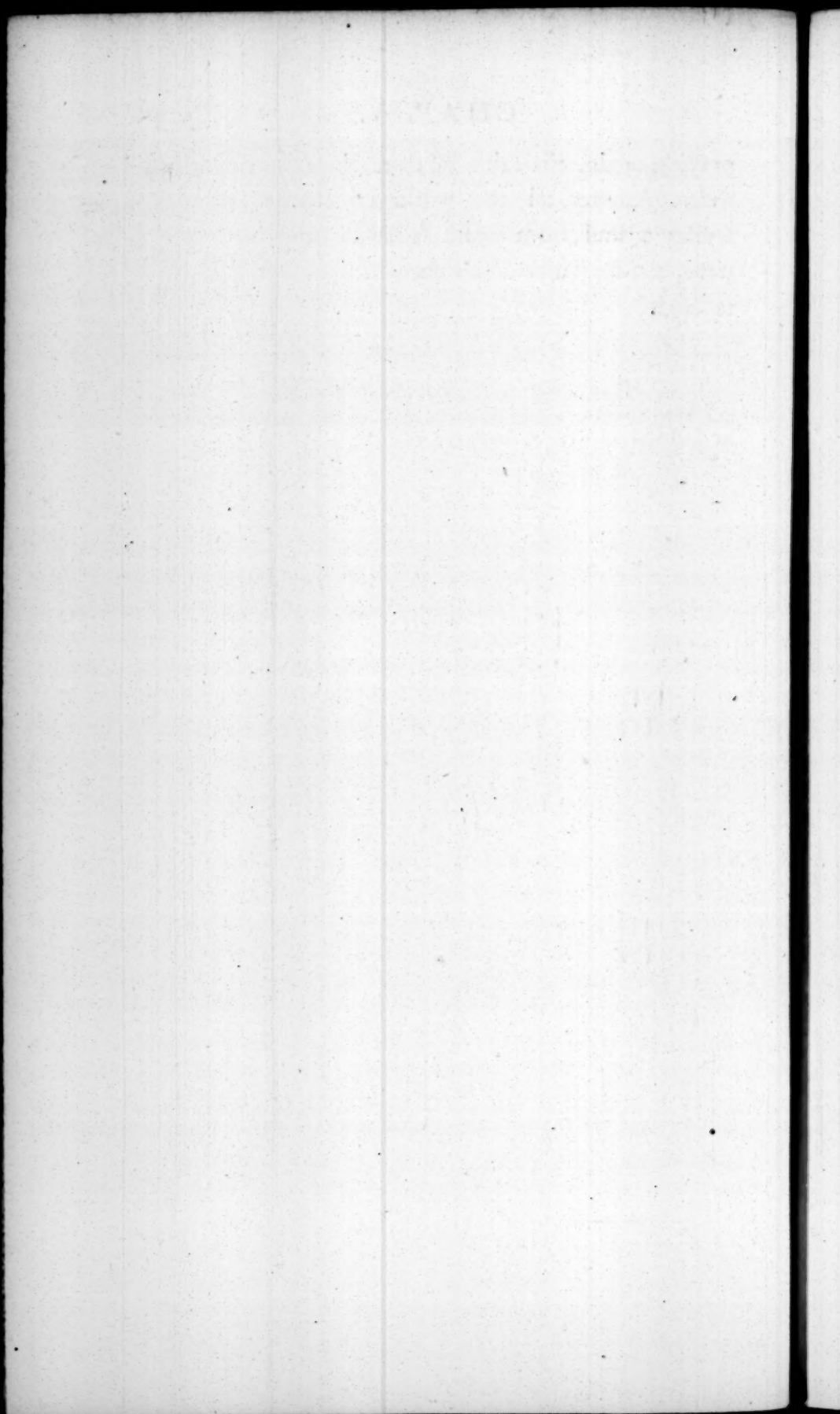
17. The case of Elijah, here alluded to, seems to be this. He feared, from God's threatenings against idolatry, that the whole land should be destroyed; and therefore he prayed for a drought, in order to bring the people to repentance by a slighter punishment. The apostle's inference is, that the slighter punishment of sickness was intended to save the *soul from death*.

praying

praying again, the rains fell; and the earth produced fruit. Among all the works of charity, that of 19. 20. saving a soul from death, and covering up, as it were, the iniquities of a sinner, is the most pleasing to God.

19. 20. These two last verses are connected with the 16th. We are there directed to endeavour the recovery of a sinner; and here we find how acceptable a work it is to God.

END OF THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.



P R E F A C E

TO THE

FIRST AND SECOND

EPISTLES OF ST. PETER.

ST. Peter is supposed to have lived chiefly in Judea; though he carried the gospel into several parts of Greece. He visited Rome also, where he is said to have suffered martyrdom under the emperor Nero. From hence both his epistles seem to have been written, a little before his death; to which he alludes, as an event at hand*. They may be considered, therefore, as an affectionate legacy; and were, no doubt, considered as such by the converts to whom they were addressed; though some doubt hath arisen, who these converts were. Many interpreters have conceived these epistles to have been written to Jewish Christians: others again have thought they were written only to Gentiles. Dr. Lardner hath examined both sides with great accuracy; and concludes they were written to *all* Christian converts; but *chiefly* addressed to those of Gentile extraction.

* 2 Pet. i. 14.

In his first epistle, St. Peter exhorts his Christian readers to persevere in their religious principles, on various motives. He inculcates universal love—purity of life—obedience to government—the observance of relative duties—and Christian gentleness in all situations, even in that of suffering. He lastly addresses the ministers of the gospel; and concludes with some general instructions.

The second epistle begins as the first, with exhortations to perseverance in holiness. The apostle then warns his hearers against false prophets and deceivers—reminds them of God's judgments; and concludes with exhortations to true religion, from a view of eternity.

FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE

O F

ST. PETER.

CHAP.

I.

PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to all the Christian converts, scattered through different parts of Asia, (who having embraced that gospel

1. 2.

2. *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God.* On this passage the advocates for the doctrine of predestination to future happiness lay great stress. But, I think, it receives little support from it. As we find that all the Christians of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, &c. are the *elect*, nothing can be more absurd than to suppose so large a body of people were all in a state of salvation. Nothing can be collected from the passage, but that Gentiles were pointed out by *prophecy*, or the *foreknowledge of God*, to be ingrafted into the Christian church. St. Peter's whole language, both in this and the following epistle, shews, he did not consider these converts to be in a state of absolute grace. His language all along implies what he says in direct words in the next epistle (i. 10.). *Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.* If it were already sure, what occasion for giving any farther diligence? — I shall only add, that in the opening verses of this epistle is contained a sketch (complete, as far as it goes) of the whole economy of our redemption. It is the *free gift of God the Father*. We are led to obedience *through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit*: and are finally *justified by the blood of Christ*. This doctrine is every where scattered through the scriptures; but I know not that it is any where brought together, in one view, so completely as it is here.

which

which God had originally promised, lead lives answerable to it, through the sanctification of the Spirit; and hope of salvation through the death of Christ,)—grace and peace be multiplied unto you!

3. 4. 5. Blessed be God evermore, who hath raised us, by the resurrection of Christ, to the hope of an eternal inheritance; which is reserved for us, if we persevere
6. in our faith. This hope ought to be the source of all your happiness; though it may, during this life,
7. engage you in trials and afflictions. These, as a furnace tries gold, will purify your faith more and more,
8. 9. and draw you to Christ. And though you were never blessed with the sight of your Saviour, as many of your fellow-Christians have been; yet you have evidence sufficient to believe on him—and to rejoice in the hope of that salvation, which is the end of your
10. 11. faith. The evidence, indeed, of all the holy prophets is sufficient; who, through the Spirit of God, foresaw these things; and testified of the sufferings of Christ, and of his glorious state, that should follow.

5. *Kept through faith*, says our translation: but the original (*δια πιστεως*) may rather perhaps signify, *during faith*. The preposition *δια* has various significations; and, I believe, among others, may admit this. As *δια νομου* during the time of the law. Rom. iv. 13. *δια τη σωματος* during our abode in the body. 2 Cor. v. 10. The original word *φρουρουνης* is very strong; as if the faithful in Christ were preserved while they continue so, as in an impregnable garrison.

11. The Spirit which inspired the prophets, is here called the Spirit of Christ.

Their

Their testimony agreed, that this great revelation should not take place in their days: they only predicted, what should afterwards be preached under the influence of the Holy Spirit—that great dispensation of God, which even the angels examine with astonishment. 12.

Let these thoughts, therefore, keep you firm in your profession; and in the holy expectation of the last great day. Utterly detesting those abominable impurities in which you once lived, become now the obedient children of God: and let his purity be your pattern, as you are directed in scripture. You are assured that God is no respecter of persons; but judgeth every man according to his work. Live, therefore, in a constant course of watchfulness and apprehension of danger. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17.

As an inducement to you to add your own utmost endeavours to God's kindness, consider how precious your souls are in his sight. You have been redeemed, not with the corruptible things of this world, silver and gold; but with the blood of Christ. And this redemption was pre-ordained from the foundation of the world; though it is opened only to us at this time. Let it, therefore, excite in you a trust in that God, who, by raising up Christ from the dead, gave you the strongest foundation for faith and hope. 18. 19. 20. 21.

12. The angels desiring to look into the mysteries of Christianity hath been thought by some to be an allusion to the posture of the cherubims over the mercy-seat. The idea certainly should check our curiosity in prying into many things which it is impossible we can comprehend.

16. See Levit. xi. 44.—xix. 2.—xx. 7. 26.

22. Since, then, you have given yourselves up to the profession of this holy religion, shew it in the performance of that great duty, in which it particularly
23. engages you, the universal love of mankind; considering yourselves now, not of an earthly lineage; but
24. as born of God, through Christ. Every thing human, as well as all the productions of nature, are subject to
25. decay: but the religion of the gospel is that holy
- CHAP. II. dispensation, which the prophet describes as enduring
 { for ever. As you are now, therefore, born anew into
1. 2. 3. this holy religion, lay aside all malice and guile, and hypocrisy and evil-speaking; and like children fed on simple diet, receive in your hearts the pure principles of the gospel; and taste the grace of God.
4. 5. Let all worldly prejudices be dispelled. Consider yourselves as forming a part of a nobler temple than that of the Jews; and in which a much more spiritual sacrifice is offered to God through Christ.
6. This is agreeable to the prophecy of Isaiah: *Behold, I lay in Sion a corner-stone; and whatever rests on it*
7. *shall be firmly established.*—Thus the Messiah is characterized to the true believer. But to the unbelieving Jew, he is held out by one prophet, (though the head-stone in the corner, uniting Jew and Gentile in one building; yet) *as disallowed by the builders:*
8. and by another prophet, he is represented as a *stone*

25. See Isa. xl. 6, 7, 8.

6. Isa. xxviii. 16.

7. Psalm cxviii. 22.

8. Isa. viii. 14.—The expression, *whereunto they were appointed*, is much the same as that in Acts xiii. 48, *ordained to eternal life*. Those were appointed to destruction because of their wickedness: and these were ordained to salvation because of their obedience.

of stumbling and a rock of offence to those, who, being wilfully disobedient, draw upon themselves that punishment which God hath appointed. But you who have embraced the gospel, are considered by God as the inheritors of all those holy blessings which were promised to the Jews. You now display more eminently the glory of God, in being drawn from darkness to light, than the Jews anciently did. Though you were before considered as a race not deserving notice; you are now received more fully into the favour and mercies of God than they formerly were.

Fully impressed, then, my brethren, with these high ideas of the dignity of your heavenly calling, consider yourselves only as passengers through this world; and abstain from all its guilty pleasures, which debase and corrupt the soul. Among your Gentile neighbours, let your conduct be particularly guarded. Though they consider you now as ill-disposed people, they may begin to admire your innocent and pious behaviour; and may at length be led to serious thoughts, in some alarming day of visitation.—And to shew them that you do not wish to interfere with any of their civil rights, submit peaceably to whatever government you live under, and to every department of it. And let this be done in obedience to the will

9. Exod. xix. 5, 6.

13. Ideas had gotten abroad, that the Christian religion was a kind of manumission from all government: especially among the Jewish Christians, who added their national prejudices to these opinions.

14. *Unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him.* Here is a plain designation of the governors of provinces sent by the Roman emperors.

15. of God. This also is the most effectual way of silencing the prejudices and ignorance of your adversaries.
16. You are free, in one sense, indeed : but you must not consider your freedom as a privilege against the rights of government ; but merely in a spiritual sense.
17. Pay, therefore, such respect to the several orders of men as is due to them ; shewing, at the same time, an affectionate regard to each other, from whatever stock you become Christians. In short, adhere firmly to your religion, and perform all the duties of good citizens.
18. In private life, let the same rules be observed. The slave who becomes a Christian, is still a slave. His religion must enable him to submit even to an imperious master. If a man suffer patiently for an offence, he deserves little praise. But when he bears, with resignation to God, unjust usage, God will not fail to accept his patient sufferings. Remember always, as the pattern of your imitation, the great example of
19. 20. your blessed Saviour ; who, though innocent himself, bore all the reproaches and cruelty of his persecutors,
21. with holy submission to God. He bore even the punishment of the cross, for the sins of mankind.
22. 23. In short, you should consider yourselves as having formerly been sheep going astray ; but as now brought to the fold of Christ.

CHAP.

III.

1. 2.

The same rule obtains also between man and wife. Religion makes no change in this union. If a Christian woman be married to a heathen, let her still

1. *And love—without preaching—merely by her example.*

observe

observe the duties of her station. Her mild and ^{3.4.5.6.7.} modest behaviour may perhaps bring over her unbelieving husband. But let her trust to the ornament of her mind, not of her dress. Like the holy women of old, like Sarah and others, who lived in patriarchal times, let her behave with mild submission to her husband; and fill her station, however difficult, with meekness and constancy.—Let the husband also treat his wife with gentleness and kindness; and consider her, though a heathen, as one with whom he may hereafter be able to unite in the same worship.

In conclusion, my brethren, shew every degree of ^{8.} kindness to each other; and bless your persecutors, ^{9.} however ill they use you. Such a disposition will change the curse of an enemy into the blessing of God. Even in a temporal way, this gentleness has ^{10.11.12.} its effect. You may consider the prophet's words, as declaring the happiness both of this world and the next. *He that loveth life, and would see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips, that they speak no guile. Let him leave off evil, and do good: let him seek peace with his utmost endeavour. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous; and his ears are open to their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

A Christian behaviour is certainly the best mean ^{13.} of preserving you from the evils of this world: and ^{14.} if you happen to fall into them, (especially if you are

10. 11. 12. See Pf. xxxiv. 12. &c.

persecuted for your religion,) it is the best way of supporting yourselves under them. The Christian sufferer finds matter of joy, even in his sufferings. Be not afraid, then, of any of the evils which this

15. world can bring upon you. Devote yourselves to God; and he will assist you in giving an answer to all who demand a reason of your faith: but let that answer always be given in the spirit of meekness to

16. man, and of reverence to God.—Under the influence of a good conscience, therefore, it may be hoped, you will silence the accusations of your persecutors. But if it be the will of God that you should

17. suffer, you will have the comfort of suffering with innocence, after the example of our blessed Saviour,

18. who laid down his life for the sins of others, and was afterwards raised, as you also shall be, to everlasting glory. That same Spirit which warned the ancient

21. world, in the days of Noah, to escape the threatened evil, offers salvation to you through baptism, of which the ark is a kind of type; holding out the assurance of that salvation, through the resurrection of Christ;

22. who is now ascended into heaven, and seated in infinite glory.

CHAP.

IV.

1. 2.

Learn, then, to suffer, after the example of Christ; and let this mortified spirit lead you from all the sinful gratifications of life; and make you feel that there is

19. Wicked persons are often represented by Isaiah and other sacred writers, under the idea of prisoners. I have endeavoured, as much as I could, in this difficult passage, to give what appears to me the connection and scope of the apostle's argument.

20. Saved by water; *δι' ὕδατος*, carried safely through the water.

no true enjoyment, but in obedience to the will of God. Long have you Gentile Christians lived in the practices of a wicked world. It is now time to renounce them all; and to set against the reproaches of worldly men, the awful reflection, that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. The gospel was preached to you Gentiles, that, whatever may be the prejudices of worldly men, your souls may be purified by the graces of the gospel.

But, above all things, let this great consideration sink deep within you, that the end of all things is at hand. Let it urge you to be serious, devout, and charitable. Charity covers both your own sins and the sins of others. Communicate with each other the things of this world. Communicate also your spiritual gifts, as good stewards of the different graces of God: and whether you expound in the church, or minister, or perform any other office, consult only the glory of God through Christ; to whom be honour and praise, for ever and ever. Amen!

6. I find no interpretation which, I think, reconciles this difficult passage with the context so well as this.

7. Some interpreters refer the end of all things to the conclusion of the Jewish state. I think the conclusion of the Jewish state has little to do with the present argument. Though the end of all things might not literally be at hand, yet every man's death is the end of all things to him. Our Saviour speaks the same language. Matt. xxiv. 14.

8. *Fervent charity*, says the text: *αγαπη εναντι*; signifies rather *continued, uninterrupted charity*—that embraces all mankind—and that not in a desultory, but in a uniform manner. It covers the faults of others, by bearing, forbearing, and forgiving. It covers our own, through that forgiveness which God has promised to those who forgive others; and also because charity, being the fulfilling of the law, leads directly to a life of holiness.

12. Once more, my brethren, let me beseech you not
 to be disheartened by the persecutions which await
 13. 14. you : but rather rejoice that as you are partakers of
 Christ's sufferings, you shall also be partakers of his
 15. glory.—In the mean time, it is as reproachable for
 16. a Christian to suffer as an offender, as it is glorious
 17. 18. for him to suffer for his religion.—Thus, amidst
 the general ruin which is coming upon these wicked
 times, the Christian shall have his share. But his
 afflictions will be light, in comparison of that great
 19. overthrow which shall destroy the Jewish nation. Let
 him, therefore, conscious of his own innocence, and
 the goodness of his cause, commit himself, in all his
 distresses, to God, his faithful preserver.

CHAP.
 V.

1. 2.

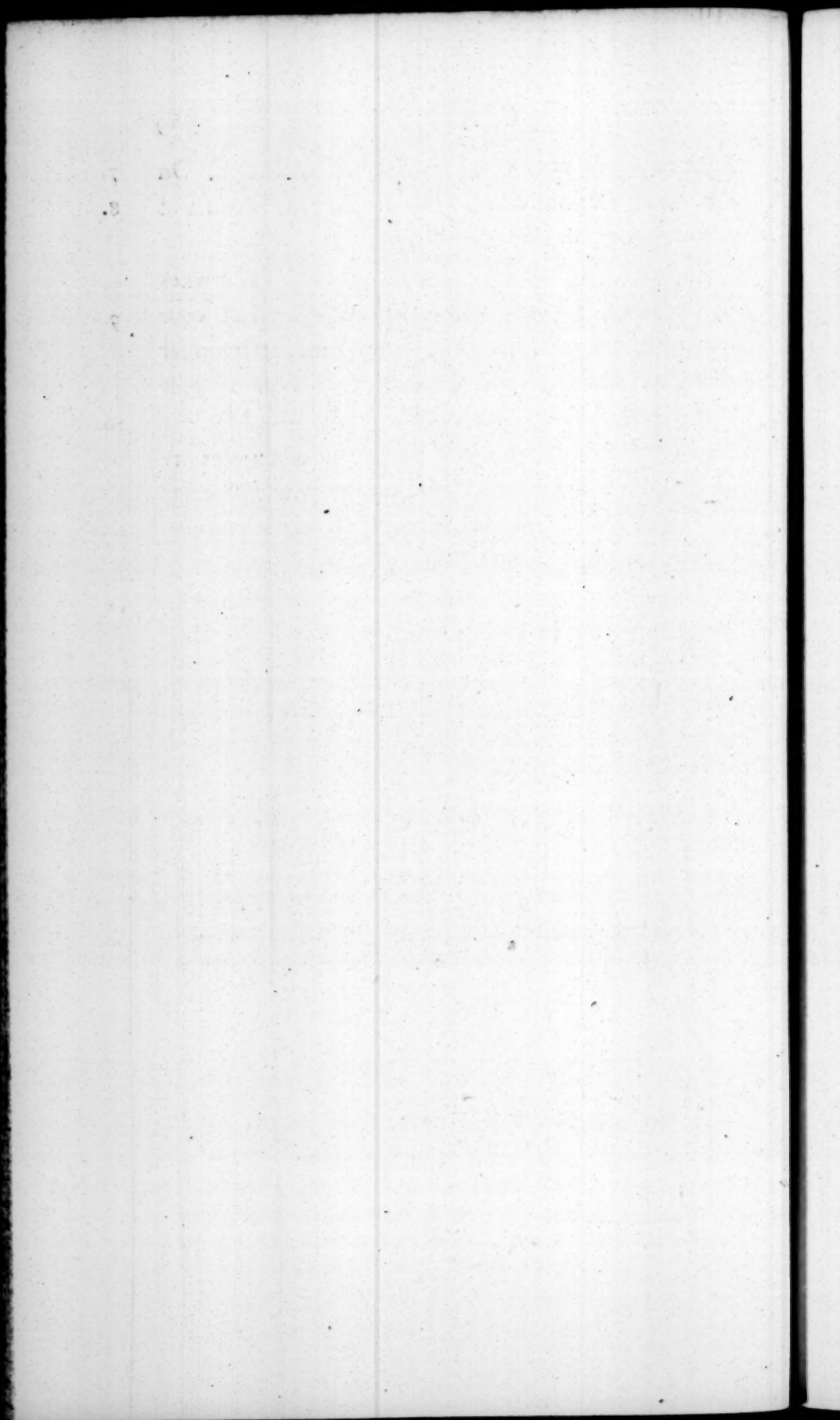
- To these general instructions, let me add a parti-
 cular one to the elders of the several churches ; whom,
 with the authority of an apostle, and a witness of the
 sufferings of Christ, I exhort to attend diligently to
 their respective charges, with that ready, disinterested
 mind, which shews them to be under no constraint.
3. Among other things, let them avoid a haughty, im-
 4. perious behaviour ; and instruct their flock, by an
 example of meekness and piety : that when the great
 Shepherd shall appear, he may approve their con-
 5. duct. Let the younger pay a deference to the elder.
 Let a general humility take place among you ; for
 pride is one of those vices which are most offensive
 to God ; and humility one of those virtues which are
 most pleasing in his sight.
6. If, then, you are to shew humility to man ; you
 ought more especially to humble yourselves in the

fight of God, who never rewards self-exaltation. On 7.
him throw all your cares. He is your true friend and 8.
only support, in all your distresses.

In fine, be constantly on your guard. The wiles 9.
of the devil surround you on every side. Let your
faith support you. At the same time, remember
that your trials are not greater than those of your
brethren in different parts of the world.—May the 10.
God of all grace, who hath opened to us an eternity
of glory, confirm your faith through your sufferings
for Christ; to whom be ascribed all praise and do- 11.
minion for ever. Amen!

This short letter, my brethren, intended to 12.
strengthen you in your profession, I send by Silas,
a sincere professor of the faith.—The church of 13.
Babylon, which unites in the same faith with you,
unites also in this salutation.—Remember always 14.
to exercise among each other every office of charity;
and may the peace of God reside ever among you.
Amen!

13. Most commentators suppose the apostle calls Rome by the
name of Babylon, as it cannot be imagined he could mean the real
city of that name.



SECOND GENERAL EPISTLE

OF

ST. P E T E R.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

SIMON PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to all who, through the goodness of God, are partakers with us of the blessings of the gospel—grace and peace be multiplied, through the knowledge of God, and of his glorious promises in Jesus Christ !

This holy religion fully opens to you the means of attaining everlasting happiness ; and the completion of those great promises, which, after you have purified yourselves from the corruptions of the world, will make you partakers of a divine nature.—Endeavour,

3.

4.

5. 6. 7.

1. The beginning of this epistle conveys much the same meaning as the beginning of the first, and may be a comment upon it.

4. Not *the* divine nature, as our translation has it.

5. These verses are generally explained thus. Add to your *faith, courage* in professing it. To this add a distinct *knowledge of all its principles*. To this add temperance, or the *government of your*

- deavour, therefore, with all your care, to attain these blessings of religion ; adding to your faith every virtue to God, your neighbour, and yourselves. This holy practice alone will shew the proficiency you have made in the knowledge of the gospel. He who is deficient here, shews plainly that he is not in a state of grace. As you are now, therefore, by the goodness of God, members of this holy religion ; see that you persevere in the practice of all Christian duties ; which will ensure you a blessed resurrection in the kingdom of Christ.—While I am with you, I cannot but remind you of these things ; though you are so well acquainted with them. I am assured, from what our blessed Lord formerly told me, that I shall soon be taken from you ; and I could wish to leave in your memory the importance of these things. Your faith in Christ, as the great Saviour of the world, does not rest on fable and invention ; but on the testimony of eye-witnesses. I am particularly enabled to testify this great truth, having been admitted to that glorious vision on the mount, when Christ was de-

your passions ; and to temperance, patience, or resignation in your distresses. To patience add godliness, or the sincere worship of God. To godliness, kindness to all your near connections ; and to kindness add a general benevolence to all mankind.—But if we examine this catalogue of graces and virtues, it does not, I think, appear, that they run in any regular series. The duties to God and man are intermixed without any attention to exact order.—All I mean to infer is, that the sacred writers neglect the logical forms of human composition—and that the apostle just marked those virtues which we ought most to aspire after ; but did not mean a regular dependent series of them.

14. See John xxi. 18, 19.

17. 18. See Matt. xvii. 1.—Mark ix. 2, 3.—Luke ix. 28.

clared,

clared, by a voice from heaven, to be the Son of God. But you have the most convincing proof of this truth from prophecy, which you will do well to consider as what, above all other things, tends to throw the light of truth upon your minds; knowing that no prophecy is of private interpretation, or of human origin; but that all the prophetic writings were dictated to holy men, for great purposes, by the Spirit of God.

CHAP.

II.

But as there were false prophets under the law, so shall there be false teachers under the gospel; who shall

1.

19. It has always given me peculiar pleasure to read St. Peter's encomium on prophecy; as prophecy is the most convincing evidence of the truth of our religion. Bp. Burnet gives a remarkable instance of its force in the conversion of that celebrated penitent the Earl of Rochester; who was struck with nothing so much as the comparison of Christ's death with the liiid chapter of Isaiah. — These words, however, though they appear very plain, have given occasion to much dispute. See Bowyer's conjectures. — Some suppose, they may allude to what the Jews call the *Bath-col*, or *daughter of a voice*; which was supposed by the credulous and superstitious, to be a mode of prophecy. The apostle's argument, on this supposition, is, that as the voice he had heard, proclaiming Jesus to be the son of God, might be considered by some people among the idle stories of prophetic voices, he had them recollect, that this truth was founded on prophecy.

20. The expression, *private interpretation*, should, I think, check much of that readiness with which many have applied the prophetic writings to the events of history. Many of these events have little relation to Christ's kingdom; to which all prophecy, in some shape or other, seems intended to point.

1. *The Lord who bought them*, is commonly interpreted of God, rather than of Christ; as the word *διεπορεύς* is never applied to Christ in the New Testament, and as the verse seems to allude to Deut. xxxii. 6. in which God is said to have *bought Israel*. But though the words might *primarily have that meaning*, I think it more probable that the apostle *applied* them to Christ. — By the *false teachers* who bring in *damnable heresies*, some suppose the apostle means the Nicolaitans, an abominable sect mentioned Revel. ii. 6.

Church

- shall introduce vile heresies, denying even the Lord who bought them; and shall draw upon themselves a sudden ruin. They shall influence many, and deceive them through interested views, and bring great slander on the truth; till their destruction, which is advancing apace, shall suddenly overwhelm them.
- 4.5.6.7.8. Nor is this destruction, which is coming upon the Jews, an extraordinary instance of God's justice. Against enormous wickedness he hath often executed severe judgments. The angels that sinned were driven from the presence of God. The old world was destroyed by a flood; and Sodom and Gomorrha by fire. But from the former of these calamities, Noah, who had endeavoured to convert his unrighteous neighbours, was exempted; and from the latter, Lot was delivered, who had all along opposed the wickedness of the country in which he dwelt. Thus mercy and judgment are equally tempered in the hands of
9. God.—But chiefly they who give themselves up to uncleanness, to pride, and blasphemy, provoke His
10. judgments. So far are they from imitating the mild-
- 11.12.13.14.

Church history informs us, that this sect was soon extinguished. See Mosheim, vol. i. p. 116, and Dr. Whitby in locum. Whoever they were, they seem from many passages in this chapter to have been Christians—to have held heretical opinions, and to have propagated their tenets. —The *swift destruction* seems to correspond with the destruction of Jerusalem.

10. It is not easy to explain whom the apostle means to point out in this and the following verses. Some suppose, he alludes to certain false opinions which prevailed about heavenly beings. Others (among whom is Dr. Lardner, see Cred. b. i. chap. viii. p. 199.) think, that some expressions in these verses allude to the riotous disposition of the Jews, which finally brought on their destruction. The chief difficulty lies in the confusion of the several ideas.

ness

ness and gentleness of heavenly beings, with which they profess to be so well acquainted, that, as if they were totally deprived even of human reason, they draw ruin upon themselves by blasphemously intruding into things they understand not—by the abominable impurity of their lives—and by their endeavours to lead others into the same wickedness which they practise themselves. Like Balaam, they are continually corrupting such as will listen to them, to promote unworthy ends of their own; unmoved by the plainest appearances of God Almighty's displeasure. Like dry springs, they have no issues of life. Like tempestuous clouds, they are for ever involved in darkness. Through vanity and sensual allurements, it is their business to mislead new converts. While they themselves are slaves to their lusts, they promise liberty to others: though no bondage can be so severe as the bondage of vicious passions. Such a case as theirs is, of all others, the most calamitous. To be again entangled in the pollutions of the world, after they had once known the truth, is certainly a much more dangerous situation than that of having never known it. It shews so innate a corruption of heart, that there is no farther hope of recovery.

This

15. In the Syriac, it is Balaam the son of Beor. Some suppose St. Peter writes Bosor for Beor in the Chaldee dialect. Others translate Βαλααμ το Βοσορ, Balaam of the country or town of Bosor.

22. The great difference of style between the iid chapter of St. Peter's second epistle, and all the other parts both of that epistle and of the former one, hath been observed by all critics. Bp. Sherlock (on Proph. Diff. i.) supposes the apostle to have extracted these

CHAP.

III.

1. 2. This is the second epistle, my brethren, I have written to you, with a view chiefly to confirm your principles by drawing your attention to the prophets
3. and to us the apostles of Christ. The impurities of the world will always make men enemies to religion :
4. and you will hear them forming their objections to the promises and threatenings of the gospel, merely because they see things continuing in the same natural
5. 6. 7. order in which they have long continued ; as if God had given no proofs even in the external world, of his power and government ; or, as if the destruction of the earth once by water, is not proof sufficient of God's being able to destroy it a second time by fire.
8. —Be not you, my brethren, misled by these tenets of infidelity. Time is nothing with the Almighty. Compared with eternity, a day and a thousand years
9. are portions of equal value. Man judging according to his own confined ideas, attributes tardiness to God ; not considering, that he is merciful, and long-suffering, and desirous that all should come to repent-
10. ance. But notwithstanding this long-suffering, when the day of the Lord does come, it will come suddenly, dissolving at once all earthly connections.
11. Since then, my brethren, this shall be the great issue of things, what effect should the consideration
12. of it have on us ? What should our conversation and behaviour in this world be, when we reflect,

these passages, at least the sense of them, from some Jewish writings then extant. And this appears the rather, from comparing this chapter with the epistle of St. Jude, which seems to have been taken from the same original.

how

how soon both we and it shall be dissolved? But
 the thoughts of these things give *us* no distress. *We*
 rely on God's gracious promise that we shall be re-
 stored to a new and better world—the habitation of
 the righteous. As you live in constant hope therefore
 of this glorious change, take care always to be found
 in that holy state in which you ought to meet it;
 and consider every moment of delay in the Almighty
 as a new instance of his mercy to you. Thus also

15. See Rom. ii. 4.—St. Peter, with great propriety, takes this opportunity of mentioning St. Paul; because these two epistles were written to those countries where St. Paul had first preached; and to those churches which he had established. St. Peter had seen, no doubt, St. Paul's epistles; and by mentioning his name, gives his sanction to his doctrine. Though St. Paul had withstood him to his face, and rebuked him openly, (Gal. ii. 11.) he had no animosity on that head. These two holy apostles might err, and might have different sentiments: but as they both had one great end in view, they never lost sight of that; and were, of course, unanimous.

16. The words, *in which are some things hard to be understood*, are commonly applied to St. Paul's epistles. But the grammatical construction does not make that necessary. *Εν οἷς* being neuter, cannot agree with *ἐπιστολαίς*, which is feminine. *Εν οἷς* rather seems to refer to the things which Peter himself had been discoursing about; particularly to the promise of his coming (ch. iii. 4.) or the resurrection, which was a great stumbling-block to many of the early Christians. Some said the resurrection was past. Others wanting patience to wait longer for it, left the Christian assemblies: and many conceiving it to be a thing impossible, gave no credit to it at all. No doubt, says the apostle, there is difficulty in these things, which the *unstable wreck*, &c.—It must not, however, be concealed, that some MSS. of great credit read *ἐν αὐτῷ*. But I think, it is the worse reading, on a supposition that the two readings are equally authorized; for, though many things in St. Paul's epistles may, for obvious reasons, be hard to be understood by us; yet one should hardly believe, that St. Paul (writing according to the wisdom given unto him) could be really hard to be understood by those to whom he wrote. Nor is it likely, I think, that St. Peter, if it had been so, would have lessened the credit of St. Paul in his own churches, by giving them to understand, that he thought St. Paul an unintelligible writer.

OUR

- our beloved brother Paul hath instructed you ; exhorting you to receive with holy gratitude the long-suffering of God ; considering that his goodness is intended to lead you to repentance. No doubt there is some difficulty in these things on which I have been discoursing to you, and which they who are ill-disposed to the gospel, pervert, as they do other parts
17. of scripture, to their own destruction. Take care, my brethren, that you be not led away by these errors,
18. of which I have given you sufficient warning : but continue to increase in every holy grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, to whom be glory both now and for ever. Amen !

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

THREE EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN.

IN the first of these epistles, St. John gives an idea of the general intention of the gospel; which was founded on the fall of man, and meant to purify his nature anew. He then dwells on Christian charity; and cautions his readers against the love of the world, which he considers as the cause of all irreligion. He exhorts to perseverance—describes the children of God—holds out the example of Christ—marks the character of the deceiver, and of the true Christian—concluding with a short proof of the truth of the gospel.

The second epistle may be called an abstract of the first. It touches, in few words, on the same points.

The third is chiefly a commendation of Gaius.

FIRST EPISTLE

O F

ST. JOHN.

CHAP.

I.

FROM the many circumstances, my brethren,
 with regard to the life of Christ, of which I
 have been witness myself, I infer his eternal God-
 head and union with the Father, before his mani-
 festation in the world. And on this evidence, we
 have invited you into the same gracious fellowship in
 God and Christ which we enjoy; that your happi-
 ness in the profession of these holy truths may be as
 great as ours.

But you must well consider the conditional part of
 this gracious covenant. It is the constant tenor of
 the gospel, that God is a being of infinite purity;
 and that no one can have fellowship with him, who
 allows himself in the practice of any sin. On the

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

6. 7. *Light and darkness* are often used in scripture, and par-
 ticularly in St. John's works, to express a *life of purity* and a *life*
of wickedness.

- other hand, he who leads a life of purity, is both in communication with the Christian church, and may be assured, that the blood of Christ will make
8. 9. 10. atonement for all his repented sins.—Thus the whole foundation of our redemption is laid in the sinfulness of our nature. He who denies this, and goes about to establish the righteousness of man, contradicts the whole scheme of Christianity: while he
- CHAP. who piously confesses, and forsakes his sins, shall,
 II. through his Saviour's merits, receive forgiveness.—
1. 2. My first wish, therefore, in what I say, is to guard you, as much as possible, against sin: my second, to set before you, if you have sinned, Jesus Christ as the only propitiation for sin; and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. At the same time, the only test we can give of our being the objects of this mercy, is to observe faithfully the precepts of the gospel. He who pretends to the hopes of Christianity without this, may as well endeavour to reconcile the greatest contradictions:
3. while he who obeys the gospel, following with reverence those blessed steps which went before him, is perfected more and more in holiness, by the love of God.
4. And now, my brethren, in this I give you no new commandment; for the moral law was always a rule of duty. Only thus far the commandment is

8. *Which thing is true in him and in you—in Christ, who gave the example—and in you, who ought to follow it.*

new;

new; the gospel hath explained and heightened some of the precepts of morality; particularly the duty of charity. For the practice of this duty, in its most 9. 10. 11. improved state, is the very badge of the Christian profession; and he who does not thus practise it, whatever his professions may be, is still in heathen darkness. The young convert, who hath just had 12. 13. 14. his sins forgiven, and been made acquainted with the mercies of God, ought to shew his thankfulness by the conscientious practice of this duty. The confirmed Christian, who hath known his duty from the beginning, it may be hoped, will practise it. While he who hath made no great advance, yet having seen the efficacy of the gospel, in reclaiming him from sin, will feel it also in giving him a love for his neighbour.

Now the great point in clearing the way for the 15. love of God, is to guard against a love for the world. This principle, you may be assured, is wholly inconsistent with a regard for the duties of religion. The simplicity of the gospel, and the pride and 16. vanity of the world, agree very ill together.—And 17. yet one might suppose, that the transitory condition of all the pleasures of this world, and the stability of future happiness, would be strong arguments against the delusions of life.

13. Dr. Doddridge wishes to leave out this verse, which he conjectures was left out in the original. No doubt, there is an unaccountable tautology in it; and indeed in all these three verses, the 12th, the 13th, and the 14th, there is great difficulty.

18. Let me now remind you, that the calamities of the Jewish state are approaching fast. You have heard that deceivers will then abound. The appearance of so many at present, shews that this calamitous time is not far distant. They pretended a gospel-commission; but their leaving us plainly shewed they had different views. You, who have received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, are in no danger, I hope, from their deceptions. Nor do I write this to you through any diffidence: but just to mark the character of Antichrist; which consists in denying Jesus to be the Messiah. Assure yourselves that no man can deny Christ, who hath a just idea of God himself.

18. Some interpreters, though but few, will not allow the *last time*, in this place, to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, but rather to the short duration of human life. But the deceivers, who are so constantly represented as accompanying the destruction of Jerusalem, seem rather to connect it with that event.—The *last time* is, however, often a phrase of wider import. The sacred writers seem frequently to divide time into two large portions; the *former* and the *latter*; the *former* time included the whole period before the gospel; and the *latter* time, or the *last times*, included every period after it. Agreeably to this partition of time, they sometimes speak of Christ's *first*, and sometimes of his *second* coming. His first coming, including every event of the gospel to the consummation of all things, is often also divided into smaller portions. “*Christ comes in each division, that is, as oft as he thinks fit to interpose by any signal act of his power and providence. The whole period, in which any distinct state of his kingdom is carrying on, is likewise called the LATTER TIME; and the concluding part of that period is distinguished by the name of the LAST HOUR; as if the whole of each period were considered as one day, and the close of each period as the end or last hour of the day. Thus the time that elapsed from Christ's ascension to the destruction of Jerusalem, being one of the subdivisions beforementioned, is called the LATTER TIMES; and the eve of its destruction is called the LAST HOUR. He WAS COMING, through the whole time; HE CAME in the end of it.*” This accurate and judicious observation I had from Bp. Hurd. See his viith serm. on proph.

In

In the mean time, hold fast that faith which hath
 been preached to you from the beginning, in the Fa-
 ther and the Son; on which rest all your hopes of
 eternal life. Seducers will always be endeavouring
 to mislead you. But that divine Spirit, which hath
 thus far led you into the truth, will, I doubt not,
 preserve you in it. Consider the awfulness of that
 great day, when we shall all appear before the judg-
 ment-seat of Christ. As certain as God is pure, so
 certain is it that none but persons of purity can stand
 before him. Such only he calls his children: such
 only are the objects of his love. At the same time,
 we must not expect that the world which rejects
 God will regard his children.—But though God is
 graciously pleased to call us his children, we have
 yet a very imperfect conception of the happiness in-
 tended for us. One thing we know, that as we shall
 hereafter be with Christ, we shall resemble him.
 And this hope should make us wholly intent on pu-
 rifying our earthly nature. Every wilful sin is directly
 opposite to our profession. It opposes the very in-

24.

25.

26.

27.

28.

29.

CHAP.
III.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

1. We are told in the letters of the Danish missionaries (No. 7. p. 56.) that when a Malabar convert was employed to translate a catechism, in which the expression, *we shall be the sons of God*, occurred; he was struck with the boldness of it, and durst not translate it verbally; but rather wished to translate it, *we shall be permitted to kiss God's feet*.

2. *When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* The argument here is, that we must be accommodated to objects in order to see them. As our eyes, for instance, must have microscopic powers, and be, as it were, assimilated to the minutiae of nature, in order to see them; so must we be hereafter in our spiritual vision: we must be like Christ, that is, we must be assimilated to him before we can see him as he is.

- tention of Christ's coming, which was to take away
6. sin. The Christian religion expects a steady compliance with its precepts. The *wilful transgressor*, therefore, hath no conception of its truth.
7. Let no man, then, my brethren, deceive you. Your holy lives alone make you the children of God.
8. He who sins wilfully becomes the child of the devil.
9. A true sense of religion prevents all wilful sin:
10. and, above all other sins, it will prevent those of hatred and malice; which are most opposite to all
11. our holy hopes. Brotherly love is the very badge
12. 13. of our profession. But the wicked world, after the example of Cain, will persecute the true Christian, because he is more righteous than they. Be you
14. happy, however, in the thought, that you shall thus attain that heavenly temper, which will qualify you
15. for everlasting life. He who suffers malicious passions to get possession of his heart, effectually shuts
16. himself out from the favour of God. What an example have we in Christ to rouse us to kindness and affection! What acts of charity can we refuse to others, when we consider that he laid down his life
17. for us! Or can we suppose that person to have any of this heavenly love in him, who refuses to administer the trifling things of this world to the necessities of a brother? We may talk of charity:
18. but it is of no value, if it dwell only on our lips. It must sink into the heart, and become a principle
19. of action. It is then only that we can have any assurance before God. If we are conscious that our
20. charity is pretence, we should be conscious also that
- God

God sees our hypocrisy. Our confidence before Him 21.
 can depend only on our sincerity; and it is this holi- 22.
 ness of life which gives efficacy to our prayers.—
 In fine, then, the whole sum of the Christian reli- 23.
 gion consists in two words, faith and love. If your 24.
 lives, therefore, be spent under the influence of these
 two great principles, you shall enjoy a heavenly
 communication with God; and may be assured of his
 favour by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

CHAP.

IV.

And yet, my brethren, you will find much de-
 ception in the world, and many pretences to this 1.
 holy influence. But you have one certain rule to 2.
 detect impostors. Whoever pretends that Jesus is 3.
 not the Messiah, but holds out to the people the
 expectation of some other deliverer, is certainly a de-
 luder. The acknowledgment, therefore, of Jesus as
 the Messiah, is the first test of truth.—A second is 4.
 the superiority of those powers which God has con-
 ferred upon his holy servants.—A third is the 5.
 tendency of the doctrine they teach. The doctrine
 of the deluder is of a worldly nature. He speaks

3. In order to understand the test which the apostle here mentions, it is necessary to consider, that the interpretation of the prophecies of the Jewish scriptures was at this time matter of great controversy. The infidel Jews denied they were fulfilled in Jesus; and interpreted them of some future Messiah. So that these opinions became a dangerous snare to the whole body of Jewish converts; who were in the way of hearing arguments of this kind sophistically treated. They were a snare also to the heathen convert; when he found that the Jews themselves, to whom these prophecies had been given, and who might be supposed to understand them best, denied that sense of them which he had been always taught to believe was the basis of Christianity.

only to the world ; and the world only are his hearers. But our doctrines have a spiritual view ; and are understood only by the spiritual ; and these circumstances form a distinction between them and the doctrines of delusion.

7. But above all things, let us shew brotherly kindness to each other ; as nothing makes us more the children of God. He that loveth not his brother, can have no knowledge of God ; for God is love.

8. How was that love discovered to us in the death of

9. Christ ! We had no love for him, when he shewed

10. that stupendous instance of love to us in dying for our sins. How ought we, then, in imitation of such

11. goodness, to love each other ?——We cannot, it is true, see God : but we have the strongest proof of his dwelling in us, if we feel our hearts full of love.

12. to each other. God will then shew that we are his,

13. by shedding his Holy Spirit upon us ; through which

14. 15. we testify the coming of Christ into the world ; and

16. shew that salvation depends only on him. In this great act of our Saviour's love we firmly trust—and are assured, that he who approaches nearest to that divine affection which Christ shewed, approaches nearest to God. By following the example

17. of our blessed Lord, and making ourselves like him in this world ; we hope to meet his favour, and be like him in the next. When the holy flame of love

18. hath once taken possession of our hearts, all vain fears, distress, and uneasiness are excluded, with regard both to this world and the next.——Thus

19. ought

ought our blessed Saviour to be the object of our love from his great kindness to us.—But let us 20. 21. consider one thing well, that the love of our neighbour must be the test of our love of God; for a man will hardly love God, who is not the object of his senses, if he hath no love for his brother, who is continually before him.—Thus we have two great tests, as well as principles, of our religion—faith and love. The love of God consists in keeping his commandments: and if we keep the commandments of God, of course we shall love our neighbour; and shall find our happiness in our obedience. The faith of a Christian, and that regenerating principle which it introduces in the mind of man, place us above the world: and this faith depends on the evidences given at the baptism and death of Christ; and on the miracles which he wrought through the Spirit. Two or three witnesses in all human affairs are

CHAP.

V.

1. 2. 3.

4. 5.

6.

7.

6. There is always a distinction made in scripture between the *πνευμα* or Spirit, through which miracles were wrought; and the *το αγιον πνευμα*, or Holy Ghost, through which the understanding was enlightened, and prophetic gifts and tongues dispensed. See Heb. ii. 4. and Gal. iii. 5.—Our Saviour gave his disciples power to work miracles; and yet we are expressly told that the *Holy Ghost was not then given*.—There is however great difficulty, no doubt, in the last chapter of St. John's epistle.

7. I shall not enter into the dispute about this famous verse. They who wish to examine it may consult Mills's edit. of the New Testament. Other divines also have treated it largely. A late ingenious treatise has been written professedly on the subject by Mr. Travis, who hath endeavoured to establish the authority of this text; but he hath had very able opponents. After all, I cannot help observing, that it appears rather below the Christian cause to be so zealous in defending a text which in all ages hath been thought doubtful. I know not whether, for *that very reason*,

- are thought sufficient. To the truth of our religion we have the testimony of three—the Father—the Son—and the Holy Ghost; who, as they are equal
8. in power, unite also in testimony. And this *heavenly* testimony agrees also with the *earthly* one I have mentioned—the miracles which our Saviour wrought—the evidence that appeared at his baptism; and
9. the evidence that appeared at his death. Such is the testimony of God to this great truth; which is
10. certainly superior to any human testimony.—Besides, he who truly believes, feels all this evidence fully confirmed in himself. Whereas he who dis-
11. 12. believes, rejects the strongest testimony of God; and gives up all the hopes of his salvation; which depends on his faith in Christ, and obedience to his laws.
13. Thus I have endeavoured to shew you on what grounds you may hope for the mercies of God.
14. 15. And this will point out to you the spirit of such
16. prayers as will find acceptance in his sight. Particularly if any of your society is visited with sickness

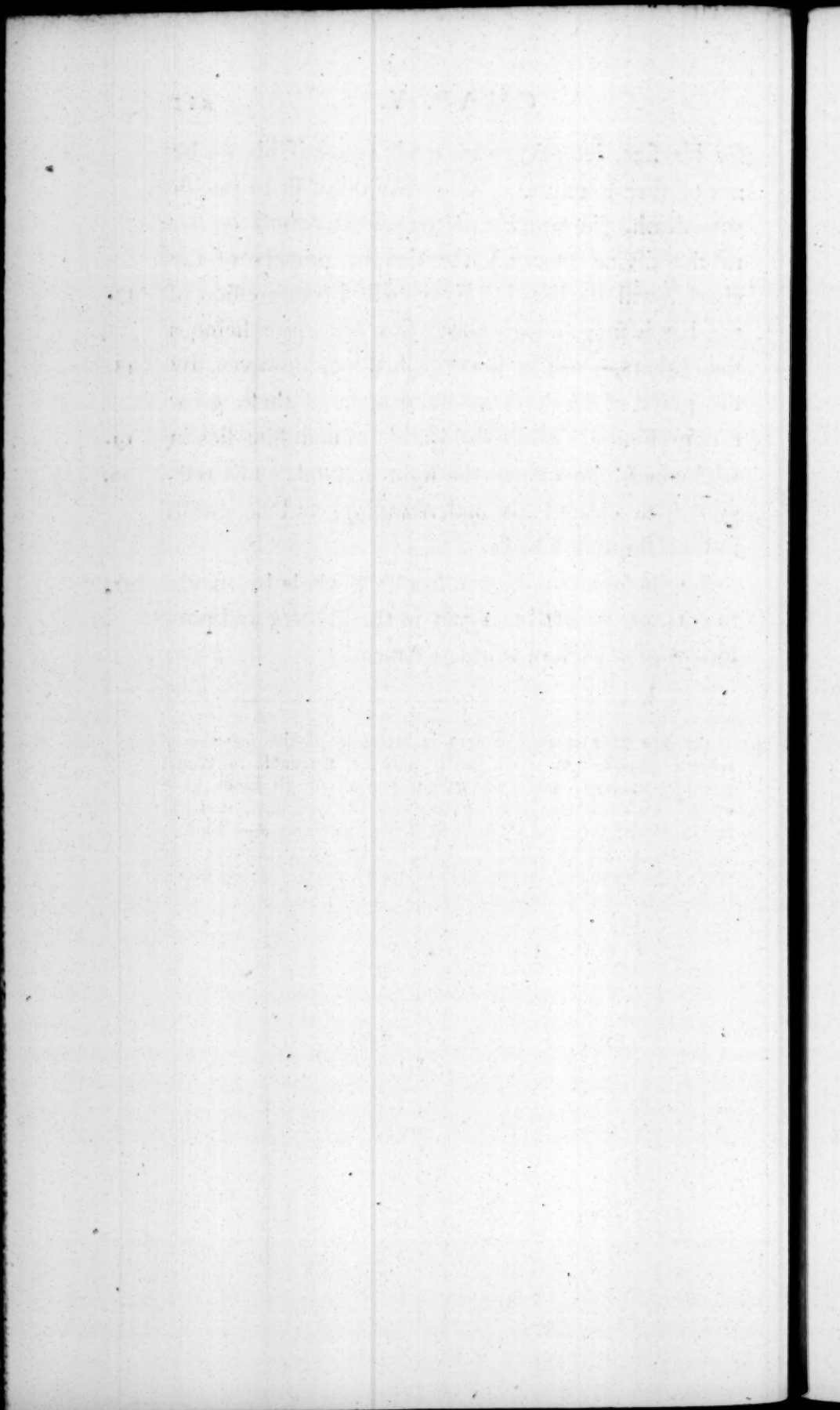
reason, I should not wish to leave it in its uncertainty. The more pains we take to secure it, the more it appears as if we thought the doctrine it contains rested solely on its authority; which we do not by any means suppose to be the case.—We have already seen a great number of texts which have at least a strong tendency to prove the divinity of Christ. I shall only add, by way of comment on them all together, that if the sacred writers did not mean to establish this truth in opposition to his humanity, they have taken very effectual pains, as the event has shewn, to lead men into idolatry.

10. This mode of evidence, however forcible among the first Christians, who were endowed with the visible gifts of the Holy Ghost, hath been too much presumed on in modern times.

for his sins, let prayer be made; and if his sin be not of such a nature as God may think fit to punish with death, (in which case the offender must be left to the divine mercy,) the devout prayers of the church will be heard. Every wilful transgression of the law is sin; though some sins are more heinous than others.—The sincere Christian, however, by the grace of God, is in no danger of these great transgressions. While the world around him lies in wickedness, he enjoys the light of God. His religion hath cleared his understanding, and he dwells in God through Christ.

Let the great conclusion from the whole be, never to entangle yourselves again in the idolatry and pollutions of a wicked world. Amen!

16. We have many instances in scripture of the *infliction of temporal punishments*. How far it may be agreeable to God's government now, when miraculous powers of all kinds have ceased, we know not: it is certain, however, we have no right to ascribe any thing of this kind to God's judgments.—This is, no doubt, a difficult passage. I have endeavoured, however, to explain it agreeably to the sense of James v. 14, 15, 16, which seems to be the best comment upon it.



SECOND EPISTLE

OF

ST. JOHN.

CHAP.

I.

JOHN the apostle, together with all the Christians
 of these parts, to the church at Jerusalem, and
 all its members—grace, mercy, and peace, from
 God in Christ !

1. 2. 3.

It hath always been a great joy to me to find your
 members adhering strictly to the faith of Christ, as

4.

1. It is a disputed point, whether the *elect lady* means some particular person, or some church in general. They who apply the phrase to a church, suppose it the church of Jerusalem ; both because St. John was an apostle of the circumcision, and because the word *κυρια*, they think, applies best to a mother-church. Others, however, suppose some Asiatic church : and in particular the church of Philadelphia, to be meant. —The greater part of interpreters, indeed, give the phrase a *general* rather than a *particular* turn. The salutation at the end, from the *children of thy elect sister*, favours it ; as churches are often thus stiled in scripture. See Isa. xlvii. 5, 6. And indeed there is nothing personal in the whole epistle. Besides, the words *εαυτης*, *υμης*, and *υμων* are used throughout it. The chief argument, I think, for its being *particular* is, that the next epistle is plainly so.

4. The word *truth* in this verse, seems to stand for the *principles* of religion. In the 5th verse the apostle speaks of the *practice* which was to follow the *principles*.

it

5. it hath been delivered to them. But you will remember, that when we preached faith, we always added
6. love to it; and there is no other way of shewing your love to God, but by keeping his commandments. The world is full of deceivers. You will
7. hear it said by many, that the true Messiah hath not yet appeared. But be upon your guard, lest you
8. lose at once all that happiness which this holy faith hath promised. And be assured of this, that there
9. is no religion in the world that is acceptable to God, but the religion of Christ.—Considering the peril
10. of the times, I should not wish you to have communication with those whose principles and practice are corrupt; lest such intercourse should corrupt you,
11. and make you partakers of the wicked opinions they may propagate.
12. I have many things to say to you, on these and other heads; but I shall not mention them now, as I propose soon to see you.
13. All the members of this church salute you.

7. See a note on 1 John iv. 3.

THIRD EPISTLE

OF

ST. JOHN.

CHAP.

1.

1. 2.

JOH^N the apostle to his beloved Gaius, and fellow-disciple in Christ—health and happiness, both in this world and the next.

The accounts which I have received, of your
steadiness in the faith, are highly satisfactory to me. 3.
Indeed, I have no greater joy than to hear of the 4.
holy lives of Christians.—Your charity and hos- 5. 6.
pitality to all the brethren; and the assistance you
give them on their several journeys, which I hear

1. Who Gaius or Caius was, is uncertain. Many suppose he was that person at Corinth whom St. Paul calls his host; Rom. xvi. 23. and that he was extremely generous and hospitable to all Christians who came there. His hospitable temper is strongly marked in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th verses of this chapter.

from

7. from all people, are most pleasing to me. They have been ever careful, you know, not to burden
8. the Gentiles; and therefore, such as assist them are greatly instrumental in promoting the interests of the gospel.
9. I should have written, at this time, to the church in general; but I was afraid lest Diotrophes, who seems to be fond of power, should have too much weight in opposing any thing I could say at a distance.
10. I propose, therefore, to check his influence by a visit among you; in which I shall correct both his words and actions: particularly that violence of temper with which he refuses to receive the brethren; and even sets himself against those who
11. would receive them. Follow not such examples; but take it for granted, that where you see a wrong behaviour, there, also, you will find a want of
12. faith.—I am glad, however, that Demetrius is every where so well spoken of. In him I cannot be deceived.

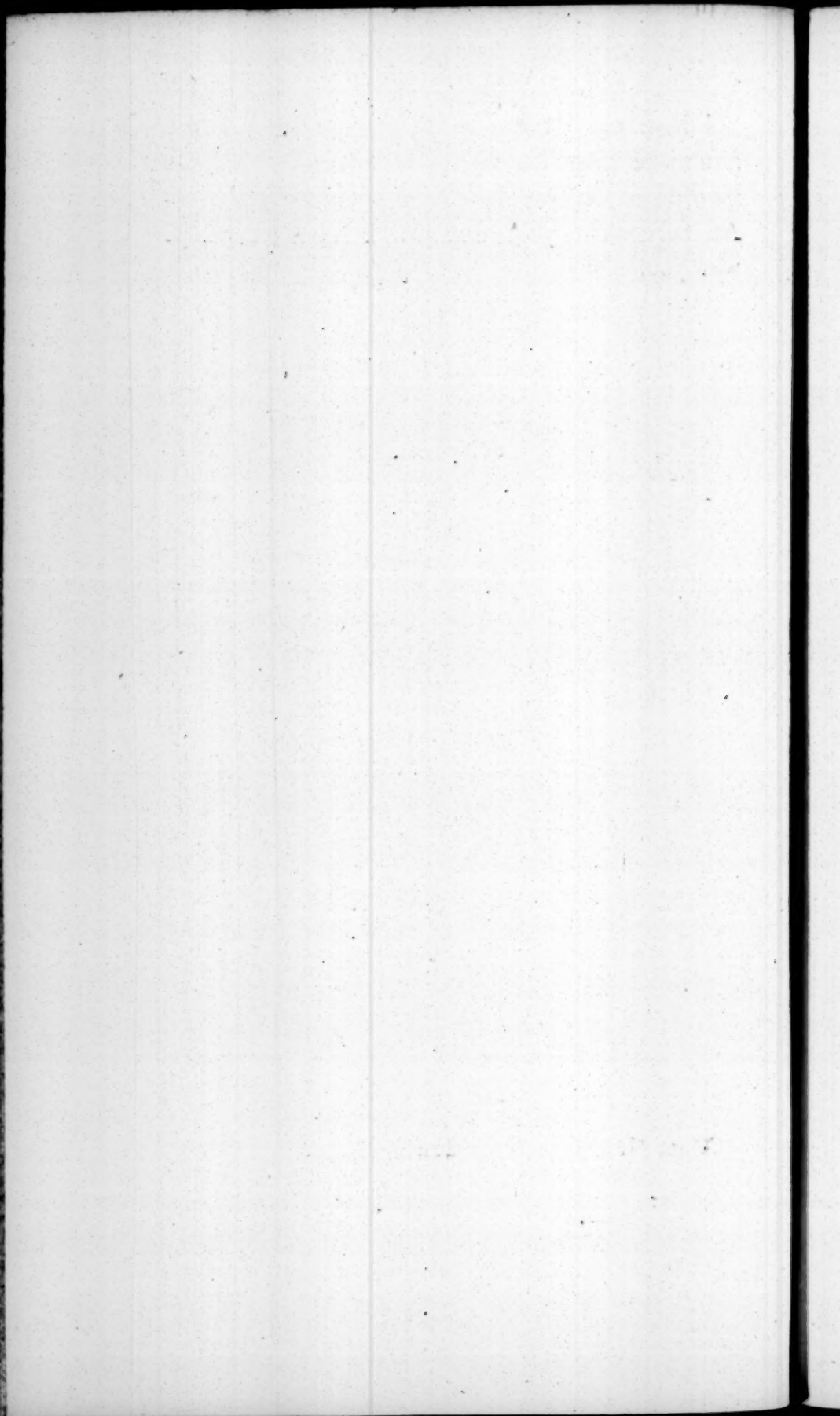
9. *I wrote unto the church; ὑπερβολ.* The Vulg. and Syr. according to the latitude of *tenses*, construe it, *I would have written*. — Commentators are divided in their opinions about Diotrophes. Many suppose he was not a heretic, but a member of the church, whose chief fault was the want of a proper humility of mind. But I think the apostle speaks in stronger terms against him than is consistent with this supposition.

11. *He that doeth good is of God*: that is, he who obeys the commandments of God, shews his belief in that God who gave the commandment.

I have

I have many things to say to you; but I shall 13. 14.
not make them the subject of a letter, as I mean
speedily to see you.—Peace be with you!—
All here salute you, and the brethren that are
with you.

END OF THE THIRD EPISTLE OF
ST. JOHN.



P R E F A C E

TO THE

EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

ST. JUDE is scarce mentioned in the evangelical history, except in the different catalogues of the apostles. He is among those who are called the *brethren of our Lord*; by which expression some understand him to have been the son of Joseph, by a former wife; and others, a relation of Mary's. Eusebius* tells us, (from Hegesippus, a Christian Jew, born in the beginning of the second century,) that Domitian, in a fit of jealousy, ordering inquiry to be made after the posterity of David, some of the grand-children of St. Jude were brought before him. The emperor, first asking them several questions about their profession and manner of life, which was husbandry, inquired next about the kingdom of Christ; and when it should appear? To this they answered, That it was a spiritual, not a temporal kingdom; and that it should not be

* Lib. iii. cap. 4.

manifested till the end of the world.—On this the emperor, finding they were mean persons, and their principles perfectly harmless, dismissed them.

The great intention of this epistle is to exhort Christians to persevere in the faith—to avoid the wickedness of the times—and to be on their guard against deceivers.

GENERAL EPISTLE

OF

ST. JUDE.

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.

JUDE the servant of Christ, and brother of James,
to all Christians, however dispersed—mercy,
peace, and love !

My chief purpose in this epistle, is to exhort you 3.
to persevere steadily in the faith which you have
received ; for many deceivers are now abroad in the 4.
world (as it was prophesied there should be) who
denying the first principles of faith, change Christian
charity into worldly lusts. But I should wish to ad- 5.
monish you (though you have been well instructed in
these things) of the terrible judgments of God against
wickedness.—After the Israelites had been delivered
out of Egypt, you remember what wrath and de-
struction attended their obstinate perverseness.—

4. Thus I should translate the words, *of old ordained to this con-
demnation.*

6. Even the angels, who swerved from their allegiance to God, were not spared, but are reserved for the judgment of the great day.—The examples of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them—their vile lusts—and the punishment they drew upon themselves, can never be forgotten.

8. 9. 10. And yet, you see, what wickedness prevails—what abominable uncleanness—what general corruption—what opposition to all government! The very language of men discovers the pollution of their hearts. Even their traditional accounts, so much the object of their attention, in which the contest is related between Michael and the devil, about the body of Moses, give them very different instruction. There, though the contention was so debasing, the arch-
11. angel treats his adversary even with gentleness; while the wicked people of these days follow the examples of the very worst persons they find recorded in the bible-history—the malice of Cain—the covetousness

7. *Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*—that is, those cities were for ever destroyed. The apostle cannot well mean *future punishments*; because he mentions it as a *Δειγμα*—something that was to be a visible example to all.

9. We are under the necessity of making the best sense we can of this very difficult passage, which has received so little elucidation from the hands of commentators.—They who do not like the supposition, that the apostle alludes to some traditional account of the angels burying the body of Moses, which the devil wished to have discovered, that the people might worship it, may suppose that he alludes to Zech. iii. 2. in which Joshua, the high-priest, is represented standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him: to whom the angel said, The Lord rebuke thee. Joshua the high priest may stand for the Jewish people; which *the body of Moses* in this passage may also represent. It is a familiar mode of speaking; St. Paul calls Christians the *body of Christ*,

and

and seducing arts of Balaam—and the implacable opposition of Corah. A feast of charity they turn into wantonness. Like unwholesome air, they blast wherever they come. Like withered trees, they only encumber the ground. Like waves, they spend their rage only in foam. Like uncertain meteors, their light soon sets in darkness.—Against such persons Enoch prophesied, when speaking of the old world, he threatens them with God's holy displeasure for their enormous crimes. Nor can those times furnish worse examples than these, of pride, uncleanness, and wickedness of every kind.

But do you, my brethren, always keep in mind (what you have so often heard predicted) that at this time deceivers should arise who should separate themselves from the church—relinquish all its blessings—and in the spirit of sensuality, follow their own lusts. —You, in the mean time, being firmly established in the faith, and having a holy communication with God, through the Spirit, keep steadily obedient to the divine laws; and wait patiently for that blessed reward which is promised to you through Christ.

12. The text says *twice dead*; the apostle may mean, that they were once wicked Jews, and having apostatized, are now wicked Christians. Or perhaps he only expresses more strongly their deadness, as Virgil expressing happiness, says, —*terque quaterque beati*.

14. We have no account of any such prophecy; unless the apostle alludes to the name of his son *Methuselah*, which signifies, that *after his death should succeed destruction*, that is, the flood.

22. 23. Treat the weak with gentleness—the stubborn and
obstinate with severity; having affection for their per-
24. 25. sons, while you abominate their crimes. And may
that gracious God, who created and redeemed you,
preserve you faultless to that great day! To him be
glory, majesty, and dominion for ever. Amen!

END OF THE EPISTLE BY ST. JUDE.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

THE Revelation of St. John seems universally acknowledged to be a very authentic part of the sacred canon. It is mentioned as such by some of the earliest fathers; particularly by Ireneus, who lived in the second century, and was acquainted with Policarp, who had been the disciple of St. John himself.—After citing the authority of so early a father, it is needless to adduce the testimony of later writers—Clement, Tertullian, Origen, and others, who are yet full to the same purpose.

True it is, that, in after ages, (probably as certain prophecies, those of Antichrist in particular, began to unfold themselves with a severer aspect,) some learned men ventured to hesitate, and propose doubts. But on laying the whole of the evidence together, the deepest inquirers into this work have professed themselves fully convinced of its authenticity. At the head of these we may place the learned Joseph Mede, who gives it plainly as his opinion, that the Revelation of St. John depends on as indisputable authority

as that of any other book of the New Testament*.—Sir Isaac Newton, with equal confidence, in his observations on Daniel, hesitates not to make the same assertion†.—To these testimonies we may add that of Dr. Lardner‡, who is second to none in learning and accurate researches. This able inquirer hath fully collected all the evidence, as it stands on both sides of the question; and on a review of the whole, expresses himself clearly satisfied of the authenticity of this book.

After fixing the authenticity of it, the next object of our inquiry is the intention of it. It is supposed to hold out the prophetic history of the church of Christ, to the latest period. Many interpreters conceive the visions it contains, to be detached and independent. Others suppose the whole texture of it to be wrought into one uniform, consistent plan. Among the latter is Mr. Mede, who divides it into three great parts.—The first part, he supposes, contains the epistles to the seven churches; and is not conceived by him to be of a prophetic nature. This part is comprised in the three first chapters.—The second part contains the visions of the *sealed book*; on the leaves of which, the civil revolutions of the Roman empire, as they are connected with the church, are supposed to be pourtrayed in a kind of prophetic tablature. This part begins at the fourth chapter, and ends with the ninth.—The third part, which commences at the tenth chapter, is called the vision of the *open book*; and is delivered under an image, not unfrequent in the prophetic writers, of eating a book; which fills the prophet with the visions it contains. This part is supposed to hold forth the latter periods of the church; its apostacy

* See his works, p. 602.

† P. 249.

‡ Hist. of the Writers of the N. T. ch. 22.

from the truth, and its final restoration. — And as the plan of the whole is supposed by this learned writer to be consistent, the prophecies contained under each vision are conceived to synchronize, or to relate to the same events. Thus the seventh seal is supposed to contain the seven trumpets; and the seventh trumpet to contain the seven vials.

Such is the plan of Mr. Mede. How far he, and other writers who have followed or deviated from his steps, have been successful in elucidating this very mysterious book, must still be left as matter of great uncertainty. The obscurity of the subject makes it easy to hazard an ingenious conjecture: and, no doubt, many things have been said upon it, which have nothing better than ingenious conjecture to support them; especially in explaining the detail of each prophecy, in which, perhaps, many little circumstances, not essential to the main subject of it, are interpreted with a precision below the dignity of the prophet. How easily the wit of man may err in *conjecturing* on this difficult subject, may be illustrated by a remarkable story, which bishop Burnet* tells of the learned bishop Lloyd of Worcester, who had employed twenty years of profound study on this mysterious book. In the year 1696, it seems, the emperor concluded a peace with the Turks. On this occasion, bishop Lloyd informed his friends, with great confidence, that this was the last war in which the Turks should ever engage with the emperor; that their power was now abridged; and that he did not say this from conjecture; but founded it on the revelations of St. John. — How clearly he understood the revelations of St. John, the gazettes of Europe may inform us.

* See his Hist. of his own Time, v. ii. p. 204.

Prophecy was certainly given us to *prove the truth*; not to *exercise the imagination*. When, therefore, *we pretend* to be prophets ourselves, by predicting an event from the Revelations, or any other prophetic part of scripture, *before* it be undeniably completed, we may easily fall into the error of the good bishop. If a prophecy be not almost, like a mathematical demonstration, self-evident; if the wit of man be still necessary to unfold and explain it; it is no proof. It wants itself to be proved. All the grand prophecies, on which the truth of Christianity depends, have been thus clearly completed. No candid person doubts the completion of those prophecies which relate to the life and death of the Messiah—to the call of the Gentiles—to the rejection of the Jews—and to the destruction of Jerusalem. On some *particular prophecies*, hesitation may arise; but the whole together carries full conviction. But with regard to the apocalyptic prophecies, we have not that precision. They still want a full completion. Of this, the *various interpretations* of them which are given to this day, are sufficient proof. The characters of Antichrist, indeed, are so strongly marked, and have been so *generally acknowledged*, through all the reformed parts of Europe, as the chief ground of their defection from Rome, that we run little risk, I think, in applying them to the Romish church. These marks, indeed, are furnished not only by St. John; but also by St. Paul, in his delineation of the *man of sin*.—Equally pointed is the prophecy of the whore of Babylon*. The value of the argument, on this subject, may, in a degree, be ascertained from the course of it. The protestants first

* The reader may see the sum of what has been written on this subject, well explained, and brought to a point, in bishop Hurd's Sermons, preached at Lincoln's Inn.

took it up, and applied the character of the whore of Babylon to papal Rome. The marks of the *beast* were so strong, that the papists themselves, in part, acknowledged them; that is, they have generally allowed that the city of Rome was figured by Babylon: but they have endeavoured to prove that it was *imperial*, not *papal* Rome, which the prophet meant to delineate. The evasion is awkward; both because the marks do not correspond with imperial Rome; and because they were never affixed to it, till after the protestants had first applied them to the papacy.

After all, however, I know not that we have any right, in charity, to *determine absolutely*, that the whore of Babylon is the church of Rome, till we see that church reduced to the low condition of the apocalyptic whore. There is no occasion, it is true, to suppose her fall to be instantaneous, but gradual: and she hath, no doubt, in a great degree, fallen from her imperial dignity: yet, while she continues to exist—especially in that splendor which she still maintains, we should interpret these mysterious characters with caution. Till *Babylon is fallen*, the prophecy is *not completely fulfilled*.

In the mean time, though we cannot understand all the mysterious parts of this singular book; yet (its divine authority being safe) we take it into our hands with the utmost reverence; and consider it as a deposit for the confirmation of the faith of future ages. It is to us precisely what the prophecies of the Old Testament were to the Jews; nor in any degree more inexplicable. No prophecies in the revelation can be more clouded with obscurity, than that a child should be born of a pure virgin—that a mortal should not see corruption—that a person despised, and numbered among malefactors, should be established for ever on the throne of David. Yet still the pious Jew preserved his faith entire amidst all these wonderful, and, in appearance, contradictory

tory intimations. He looked into the holy books in which they were contained, with reverence ; and with an eye of patient expectation, waited for the *consolation of Israel*. We, in the same manner, look up to these prophecies of the apocalypse, for the full consummation of the great scheme of the gospel ; when Christianity shall finally prevail over all the corruptions of the world, and be universally established in its utmost purity.

But besides the prophetic character of this book, it is, in other respects, of a very singular construction. No writings, perhaps, ever exhibited so great a variety of sublime ideas, and such astonishing grandeur of divine imagery. So that, if we consider the revelation of St. John only as a poetical description of the celestial regions, and the dispensations of God, it is a very delightful and interesting composition. The glories of heaven, in the fourth chapter ; the picture of death, in the sixth, together with the consummation of all things, and the terrors of the wicked, are grand representations. How sublime is the idea, in the seventh chapter, of the angels restraining the winds ! — How nobly are the angels introduced, in the eighth, with the seven trumpets ; and with what poetical imagery does the smoke of the incense carry up the prayers of the saints before the throne of God ! — The sounding of the fourth trumpet is very grand ; and the flight of the angel through the copes of heaven, denouncing woe upon the earth. — The ascent of the locusts in the smoke of the bottomless pit ; the description of them ; and the founding of their wings in their flight, are all circumstances highly poetical : as are also the loosing the four angels from the banks of Euphrates, on the sounding of the sixth trumpet ; the description of the angel with the open book, at the beginning of the tenth chapter ; the reaping of the earth, in the middle of the fourteenth ; the grand scene, in the fifteenth, on sending out the seven angels with vials ;
and

and the pouring out particularly of the last of them.—After these splendid passages, follows that noble scene, in the eighteenth chapter, in which the fall of Babylon is described; and the pathetic lamentations made over her by the kings and merchants of the earth.—The seventeenth and eighteenth verses of the nineteenth chapter are wonderfully sublime; in which an angel standing in the sun is represented, calling the birds of prey to the banquet of the Lord, as the host of heaven is led out to battle.—The sealing up of the dragon; and the general judgment, in the twentieth chapter; and the descent of the New Jerusalem, in the twenty first, close these sublime passages with equal grandeur.

The generality of these visions, as hath been observed, are represented under the idea of pictures, pourtrayed on the leaves of a book. The prophet, therefore, employs picturesque as well as poetic imagery; and hath marked the various figures he hath introduced, with such a glow of colouring and strength of expression, as plainly shew how much his imagination was fired with the original.

The mysterious parts of this wonderful book, I have not attempted to explain; contenting myself merely with illustrating the narrative. Here, too, I have been more cautious in modernizing, than in the gospels and epistles. As I endeavoured there to *explain*, I was obliged often to give up the dignity and simplicity of the original, for the sake of making the narrative or the doctrine more easy. But here, as I have made no attempts of that kind, I have left the text more pure; and more in possession of those bold, eastern modes of speaking, which add so much to its grandeur.

R E V E L A T I O N

O F

S T. J O H N.

CHAP.

1.

1. 2.

THE following is a revelation from God, through Christ, concerning things relating to the kingdom of the Messiah, which shall soon be accomplished.—This revelation God gave to his servant John; who had already borne testimony to the truth. Happy are they whom it concerns, if they attend obediently to the prophecies contained in it; the completion of which approaches.

3.

John to the seven churches of Asia, grace and peace from the eternal, immutable God; from the Holy Ghost; and from Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead, and is now exalted to infinite glory!

4.

5.

1. The expression, *which must shortly come to pass*, need not be supposed to denote any *immediate completion*; but to be spoken in the language of heaven, in which *a thousand years are as one day*.

6. —To him who hath redeemed us with his blood, and given us access to the Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen!—I see him coming in the clouds of heaven! every eye shall see him—his murderers shall acknowledge his power—all the tribes of the earth shall mourn before him.
7. Amen! Amen!—Thus he proclaims his glorious approach. I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST—THE BEGINNING AND THE END—WHO IS, AND WAS, AND IS TO COME—THE ETERNAL, ALMIGHTY GOD.
9. I John, the companion of your afflictions, and the partaker of your hope in Christ, was in the island of Patmos, where I had been banished on account of the faith: and being earnestly engaged on the Lord's day, in meditation and prayer, I heard a voice behind me, loud as a trumpet, saying, I am the beginning and the end—the first and the last. Write what thou seest in a book; and send it to the churches of Asia—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

6. 7. These verses seem to be a sort of analysis of what is contained in the book—that is, the full conclusion of the Christian dispensation. They seem to contain the great moral of the whole.

9. Patmos was one of the Cyclades in the Egean sea, where St. John was banished, according to Ireneus, about the year 96.

11. If you inspect a map of Asia Minor, you will find these churches lie in a circular order: so that if you begin at Ephesus, you may visit them all in the rotation marked by the apostle; which was probably the course of his visitation.

Surprised

Surprised at this wonderful voice, I turned to see 12.
 from whence it issued; and saw seven golden candle-
 sticks hanging in circular order; and in the midst of 13.
 them an awful figure, like the Son of man. He
 was clothed in a long robe, girt round him with
 a golden girdle. His hair and countenance were 14. 15. 16.
 bright like snow; his eyes like a flame of fire; and
 his voice sounded like the fall of waters. From his
 mouth a sharp two-edged sword seemed to issue. In
 his right hand he held seven stars; and his feet ap-
 peared like brass, glowing in a furnace.

At the sight of such an awful figure, I was unable
 to speak, and fell down at his feet. He laid his 17.
 hand gently upon me, and said, "Fear not: I am
 the first and the last. I am he who died and rose
 again, and now live for ever, and hold the keys 18.
 of everlasting life. Write what thou hast seen.
 This vision relates to present and future times. The 19. 20.
 seven candlesticks represent seven churches; and the
 seven stars, the ministers of those churches."

To the church of Ephesus and its ministers, write;
 —Thus saith he who holdeth the seven stars in his
 right hand; and standeth in the midst of the seven
 golden candlesticks: I know thy virtuous deeds; thy
 patience in affliction; thy abhorrence of wickedness;
 thy caution against falsehood. Yet I have a matter

CHAP.

II.

1. 2. 3.

4.

12. The seven candlesticks allude to the golden lamp with its branches in the temple of Jerusalem. Throughout this book, indeed, there is a constant allusion to the ceremonies and ritual of the Jewish worship.

5. against thee. Thy ancient zeal and love for the truth are in part gone off. Repent of this lukewarmness. Recover thy old affections; or I will
6. come suddenly, and remove thy candlestick.—Yet thou hatest the Nicolaitanes, whom I also hate.—
7. Let him who hath ears to hear, remember what is said to the churches. He who resisteth the temptations of the world, shall eat of the tree of life, in the paradise of God.
8. To the church of Smyrna and its ministers, write;—Thus saith the first and the last; he who
9. was dead, and is alive. I know thy works; thy distresses, and sufferings for religion. God will repay thee. I know also the blasphemy of false brethren;
10. and their persecution of thee. But fear them not: fear not the afflictions which thou hast yet to suffer for the space of ten days. Be faithful unto death;
11. and I will give thee a crown of life.—Let him who hath ears to hear, remember what is said to the churches. He who resisteth the temptations of the world, shall not die eternally.
12. To the church of Pergamos and its ministers, write thus;—These things saith he, from whose
13. mouth issues a two-edged sword. I know thy works, and thy habitation among those who oppose the

10. Some commentators suppose, that these epistles to the churches of Asia relate to the church of Christ as divided into seven periods, and consider the church of Smyrna as representing the church of Christ in its persecuted state; making the ten days relate to the ten general persecutions:—but I think this is fanciful.

truth: and that thou hast still holden fast thy profession; particularly in the days of Antipas, my faithful martyr. But I have yet against thee thy connection with those who practise the wickedness of Balaam; who lay the stumbling-block of delusion before their brethren; who eat things sacrificed to idols, and commit fornication. Such are those of the Nicolaitane heresy. Repent, therefore, of these wicked connections; or thou shalt be consumed with the sword that issueth out of my mouth.—Let him who hath an ear to hear, remember what is said to the churches. He who resisteth the temptations of the world, shall be fed with the manna of heaven. He shall receive a tablet, inscribed with that secret name, which shall entitle him to everlasting life.

To the church of Thyatira and its ministers, write;—Thus saith he, whose eyes are like a flame of fire; and whose feet are like glowing brags. I know thy righteous deeds; thy faith; thy services; and thy increase in good works. But I have somewhat against thee, in that thou suffereest thy people to be deluded by the witchcrafts of Jezebel; and to tread in her idolatrous steps. I have given them time to repent. If they continue obstinate, I will bring my last afflictions upon those who delude, and upon those who are deluded; and I will cut off their posterity; and all the churches shall know that my judgments search deep; and I will

17. The *white stone* inscribed, alludes to the custom of passing judgment, making elections, &c. by white and black stones.

- reward and punish men according to their works.
24. As for those who abhor these delusions, I will leave on them such burdens only as their profession lays
25. 26. upon them. Hold fast the faith till I come. He that resisteth the temptations of the world, and perse-
27. severeth to the end, shall rule over the nations; and his spiritual rod shall break in pieces the idolatry of
28. the land, as a potter's vessel is broken: and I will give him the brightness and glory of the morning-
29. star.—Let him who hath an ear to hear, remember what is said to the churches.

CHAP.

III.

1. To the church of Sardis and its ministers, write thus;—These things saith he who holdeth the seven stars, and with whom are the seven spirits of God. I know thy deeds, and the name thou holdest among
2. the churches. But thy religion is dead. Rouse thyself, and awake its holy flame in thy breast. Thy
3. works are not perfect in the sight of God. Remember the early instructions of thy youth. Hold them fast in thy memory; and repent of thy sins.
4. 5. If not, I will come upon thee suddenly, and destroy thee. A few I have yet in Sardis, holy and undefiled. These, and all that resist the temptations of the world, shall stand before me in white garments. Their names shall not be blotted from the book of life; and I will present them to the Father,

5. When it is *asserted*, that their names should *not be blotted out of the book of life*, I think it is *implied*, that some names *should be blotted out*—or, in other words, that there is no security on this side the grave.

before all his holy angels.—Let him who hath an ear to hear, remember what is said to the churches. 6.

To the church of Philadelphia and its ministers, write thus ;—These things saith the Holy One. He who hath the key of David : He who openeth, and none can shut : He who shutteth, and none can open. I know thy works. I have opened the door before thee ; and none can shut it. Thou hast kept my word. Thou hast not denied my name. The apostate Jew shall bow before thee ; and shall hereafter acknowledge thee to be the favourite of heaven. Because thou hast patiently kept my word, I will preserve thee from those trials which are coming on the earth. Behold, I will come quickly. Keep thine integrity. Let no man deprive thee of thy crown. He who resisteth the temptations of the world, shall be a pillar in the temple of God. It shall stand immoveable. On it shall be inscribed the name of God ; the name also of the city of God, the new Jerusalem ; and on it shall be inscribed my own new name.—Let him who hath an ear to hear, remember what is said to the churches. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13.

To the church of Laodicea, and its ministers, write thus ;—These things saith the truth, the Lord of the creation. I know thy works, thy professions, and thy hypocrisy. O that thou wert either a 14. 15. 16.

7. Alluding to Isa. xxii. 22.

8. St. Paul often uses the same image, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. 2 Cor. ii. 12. and again Col. iv. 3.

15. The word *αἴμα* is used in this sense in Eph. iii. 10.—and Col. i. 16.

440 REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

- thorough Gentile, or a thorough Christian ! Thou
 17. art neither ; and I reject thee. In the midst of all
 18. thy professions, thou art poor and wretched. Purchase thy gold of me ; and thou shalt be rich. Cloath thyself with the white raiment that I shall give thee ; and thy nakedness shall be hid. Anoint thine eyes with the ointment of truth ; and thou
 19. shalt see. Whom I love, I reprove. Be zealous,
 20. and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.
 21. If any one heareth my voice, and openeth ; I enter, and abide with him. He who resisteth the temptations of the world, shall sit with me on my throne,
 22. as I sit with my Father on his throne.—Let him who hath an ear to hear, remember what is said to the churches †.

CHAP.

IV.

- After this first vision I had a second. I saw the
 1. doors of heaven thrown open ; and heard a voice like the sound of a trumpet, calling to me ; Come up hither ; and I will shew thee what shall come to pass.
 2. 3. Immediately I was transported into heaven, and saw a glorious form, sitting on a throne. The
 4. 5. throne was circled by a varied light, like a rainbow,

† These epistles to the churches are supposed to represent the things that *now are*, (see chap. i. 19.) or the state of religion in those churches at the time the apostle wrote : and seem to be prophetic of what was afterwards to happen to those churches. Their candlesticks are certainly now removed ; and if any thing in the book is prophetic, these epistles seem to be so.

1. This second vision represents *the things which shall be hereafter*. (See chap. i. 19.). The *door in heaven*, and the trumpet, allude to the opening of the gates of the temple, and calling the Levites to their office.

and

and emitted from every part splendid rays, like lightning; while awful sounds of speaking thunder proclaimed aloud the majesty of the appearance. Around the throne sat four and twenty elders, clothed in white garments, with crowns of gold on their heads: and before it hung seven lamps of fire, which are the seven spirits of God. The space 6. around it had the appearance of a sea of crystal.

As I viewed the throne more attentively, I saw 7. 8. it adorned with four animal forms; all endowed with life. The first had the resemblance of a lion; the second of an ox; the third had a human face; and the fourth the appearance of an eagle. Each was covered with six wings, and was full of eyes in every part; and all together joined in a chorus of praise to God; Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty; who was, and is, and is to come.

6. The sea of glass is an image taken from the brazen laver in Solomon's temple. — I think the words in the original, *ὡς περὶ τῆ θρόνου καὶ περὶ τῆ θρόνου* will bear the sense I have given. But I am the more diffident, as I have no where met with it. But it certainly adds much to the dignity of the throne, to suppose, that its very ornaments are living forms, and have their appointed services. But chiefly it takes from the grossness of the idea, in supposing four beasts mixed with the four and twenty elders. — Mr. Mede discovers from the Jewish rabbins, that these four beasts were the four ensigns of Israel, when the twelve tribes were marshalled into four companies. Judah led the first, under the standard of a lion; Ephraim the second, under that of an ox: Reuben the third, under a man; and Dan the fourth, under an eagle. — Others think there is no foundation for this, (see Mr. Lowman,) but that they rather have allusion to the cherubims in the temple. — Others again suppose, they represented the various gifts with which God endows his ministers. One has more fortitude; a second more gentleness; a third more wisdom; and a fourth more penetration. — It is plain they allude to the vision of Ezekiel, i. 10.

Immediately

9. Immediately on this chorus of praise from the
 10. several parts of the throne, the four and twenty
 11. elders arose from their seats; and prostrated them-
 selves before Him that sat on the throne, casting their
 crowns before Him, and saying, Worthy art Thou,
 O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power;
 for Thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure
 they are and were created.

CHAP.
 V.

1. 2. I then saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the
 throne, a book sealed with seven seals: and I heard
 an angel ask with a loud voice, Who is able to open
 3. 4. the book? But no one appeared. Then I wept.
 5. On this one of the elders said, Weep not, behold
 the Lion of the house of Judah shall loose the seals,
 6. and open the book.—And as I looked, behold a
 lamb stood before the throne, pierced, and bloody,
 as if it had been slaughtered. It had seven horns,
 and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God,
 7. 8. sent out to minister on the earth. He then took
 the book, and as he took it, the living forms which
 encircled the throne, and the elders having harps in
 their hands, and golden vials, full of perfumes,
 which are the prayers of saints, fell down before the
 9. Lamb, praising and singing, Worthy art Thou to

1. This book Mr. Mede calls the *codex fatidicus*—the book of the counsels of God. It is sealed with seven seals to shew that its contents are secret.

5. Christ is called the *Lion of the house of Judah*, in allusion to Jacob's prophecy. Gen. xlix. 9.

6. *Horns and eyes*, are the usual symbols of power and wisdom.

8. The vials were a sort of censers, in allusion to the censers used in the temple-service.

open the seals; for Thou hast redeemed all the nations of the earth by thy blood, and given us the blessings of thy favoured people.—This chorus was joined by myriads of angels, singing, Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive power, and honour, and glory.—And this again was joined by the whole animate creation, crying, Honour, glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.—Then the four living forms that circled the throne, cried, Amen; while the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever.

Then the Lamb opened the first seal; and one of the living forms that circled the throne, cried with a loud voice, Come, and see. On this, I saw portrayed in the book, a white horse, and he that rode upon him had a crown on his head, and a bow in his hand, and he went out to conquer.—He then opened the second seal; when another of the living forms that circled the throne, called to me in like manner, Come, and see. Then I saw portrayed a red horse; and he that rode him, appeared brandishing a sword, and frightened peace from the earth.—He then opened the third seal; and another of the living forms called to me again. I then saw on the open page a black horse; and he who rode him had a balance in his hand. And I heard a voice from the

CHAP.
VI.

1. 2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

6. *A measure of wheat for a penny.* This seems meant to describe a time of great scarcity. A penny was about $\frac{1}{4}$ d. of our money,

- the living forms around the throne, A measure of wheat for a penny—but see thou injure not the oil, and the wine.—He then opened the fourth seal; and I was again called, as before: when I beheld a pale horse; and he that sat on him was Death. Destruction followed hard behind; and power was given him to destroy a fourth part of the earth.—
7. The fifth seal was then opened. In that page I saw an altar pourtrayed, and under it the souls of those who had suffered death in testimony to the truth; and they cried, Holy Lord God, when wilt thou call us and our enemies before thee in judgment?
8. Then white robes were given them; and they were ordered to rest till the number of their brethren was completed.—After this, the sixth seal was opened: and I saw the earth rent as by an earthquake. The sun was darkened, and the moon red as blood. The stars dropped from heaven, like the decayed fruit of a fig-tree. The heavens were rolled up like a scroll of parchment. The earth was rent; and all the inhabitants in dismay hid themselves in caverns, calling to the rocks and mountains to cover them, and preserve them from the wrath of Him that sat on the throne, and from the Lamb, the day of whose irresistible displeasure was now fully

money, and was the price of a day's labour. And the measure here spoken of, is supposed to be a slave's allowance for a day. The scarcity therefore must be great, when a man's labour could merely supply himself with food, and that only bread.—This seal seems to describe *famine*; as that before it describes *war*; and that which follows it, *pestilence*.

come.

come. And as I looked, I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth; and restraining the four winds, that they might not rage against it. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, with the seal of God in his hand; and he cried to the four angels; Hurt not the earth, nor any thing in it, till we have sealed the servants of God. And there were sealed a hundred and forty-four thousand from the twelve tribes of Israel; twelve thousand from each tribe. After this, I saw an innumerable multitude of people, gathered from all nations, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb. They were cloathed in white robes, and held palm-branches in their hands; and joined in a song of praise, Salvation be ascribed to God, who sitteth upon the throne; and likewise to the Lamb. And all the company of heaven joined them, falling on their faces before the throne, and worshipping God; saying, Amen! Glory, thanksgiving, and honour be ascribed to God, for ever and ever, Amen! Then one of the elders asked me, If I knew who they were that were thus cloathed in white? I desired him to inform me. They are such, said he, as have been purified by affliction; and have washed their robes, and whitened them in the blood of the Lamb. Now they are advanced to the presence of God; and serve him day and night; and enjoy his divine communi-

1. 2.

3. 4. 5. 6. 7.
8. 9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

14. Such passages as this and those in chap. i. 5. and v. 9. are so strong for the atonement of Christ, that I see not how they can be evaded.

16. cation. They are now removed from all their afflictions. All tears are wiped from their eyes; and they shall drink of the fountain of living water.—
17. After this, the seventh seal was opened: and there was silence in heaven for half an hour. Then seven
- CHAP. VIII.
1. 2. angels stood before God, into whose hands were put
3. seven trumpets. And I saw a golden altar standing before the throne; at which stood another angel, with a golden censer in his hand; into which he put incense, that he might present it on the golden altar,
4. together with the prayers of the saints; which were carried up, in the smoke of the incense, to the
5. throne of God. The angel then filled the censer with fire from the altar, and scattered it over the earth. Thunders and lightnings followed, and a
6. great earthquake. Then the seven angels who held the trumpets, prepared to sound.
7. The first angel sounded; and a storm of hail and fire, mingled with blood, fell on the earth, and
8. destroyed a third part of its fruits.—The second angel sounded; and I saw a vast ball of fire, like a burning mountain, thrown into the sea; and it
9. changed a third part of its waters into blood; and destroyed a third part of the ships, and a third part
10. of the inhabitants of the deep.—The third angel

1. *The silence in heaven* is an allusion to a beautiful custom in the Jewish worship. When the priest went into the temple to burn incense, all the instruments which had united in grand chorus before, made a solemn pause. During this interval the priest offered up his propitiatory devotion within the temple, while the people stood praying in silence without.

sounded;

sounded; and I saw a flaming star, like a torch, fall
 on the third part of the rivers and fountains. It 11.
 poisoned all the fish; and destroyed all who drank
 of the waters.—On the sounding of the fourth 12.
 angel, a third part of the sun was darkened; a third
 of the moon, and a third of the stars. Night and
 day lost each a third of its light. And I saw an 13.
 angel flying through the copes of heaven, and
 crying three times, with a loud voice, Woe to
 the inhabitants of the earth, because of the wrath
 that is preparing against them!—Then the fifth CHAP.
 trumpet sounded; and I saw an angel falling, like IX.
 a bright star from heaven. In his hand he bore 1.
 a key, with which he opened the bottomless pit; 2.
 and the smoke burst forth like the smoke of a
 furnace, and darkened the light of heaven. In
 the smoke ascended locusts innumerable: and as 3—12.
 they ascended, they changed their forms, and,
 like horses prepared for war, became covered with
 mail. They had human faces, with dishevelled hair,
 and teeth like lions: they had crowns on their heads,
 and seemed as if they wore breast-plates of iron.
 They had tails like scorpions, full of deadly stings.
 They followed a leader, the angel of the bottom-
 less pit, whose name is Apollyon; and when they
 moved, the sound of their wings was like the sound
 of chariots, or of horses rushing to battle. But
 they had power to hurt only those who had not the
 seal of God upon them. They had not power to
 kill; but only to torment: and this power was to

- last only five months. To avoid the torments they inflicted, men wished for death ; but could not find it.—After this, the sixth angel sounded his trumpet ; and I heard a voice from the golden altar that stood before the throne of God, crying, Loose the four angels who are bound near the river Euphrates. And the angels were loosed ; and allowed for an hour, a day, a month, and a year, to destroy a third part of the human race. And their armies were myriads of myriads. They wore breast-plates of fire ; and rode on horses fierce and terrible, which breathed flame from their nostrils. They had tails like serpents ; and they destroyed a third part of the human race. Yet still the remainder of the sons of men repented not of their idolatries and their crimes.
- CHAP. X.** After this, an angel descended from heaven, in-
 throned in a resplendent cloud. His countenance shone like the sun. His feet were like pillars of fire ; and a bright rainbow circled his head. He held a small open book in his hand ; and set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth. Then he cried with a very loud voice ; which was answered with thunder. I was preparing to write what I heard ; when I was ordered to seal up what the thunder had spoken ; and not to write it. Then the angel that stood upon the sea and on the earth, lifting up his hand to heaven, swore by the almighty Creator of all things, that time should be no more ; and that after the seventh angel had sounded, the mystery of God should be finished, as
 he

he had declared by his servants. I was then ordered 8.
 to take the small book that was in the hand of the
 angel, and to eat it. It would be sweet, I was told, 9.
 to the palate; but bitter to the stomach. I did 10.
 accordingly, and felt as had been described. Then CHAP.
 said the angel to me, Thou must prophesy before XI.
 people, and nations, and kings. A measuring-rod 1.
 was also put into my hand; and the angel said,
 Measure the temple of God; measure the altar,
 and number the worshippers. But measure not the 2.
 outward court: for it belongeth to the Gentiles.
 And they shall trample on the holy city forty and 3.
 two months. And my two witnesses, cloathed in
 sackcloth, shall be appointed to prophesy a thousand
 two hundred and sixty days. These are the two 4.
 olive-trees; and the two candlesticks that stand be-
 fore God. The fire of their mouths shall destroy 5.
 all who oppose them. Even he who but desireth
 to injure them, shall suffer. These witnesses have 6.
 power to shut the heavens, so that no rain shall fall,

9. Alluding to Ezek. ii. 8.—and iii. 33. Eating a book, in the prophetic language, signifies reading it, and meditating on it. It was *sweet* to receive a revelation from God; but as it contained his judgments against the wicked, it was attended with *bitterness*.

1. Alluding to Ezek. xl. 3.

3. There is great difficulty with regard to the two witnesses. The most probable interpretation, I think, is, that no two particular persons are signified, but all who testified the truth during this period: and the number too may be used in allusion to the two witnesses which the law demanded. We observe every where in this book an allusion to Jewish customs.

4. Here is a plain allusion to Zachariah's vision (iv. 2, 11, 14.) —By the fire which proceeded out of the mouth of the witnesses, seems to be meant their great power in preaching the word of God.

- during the prophecy. They have power to turn the sea into blood, and smite the earth with plagues.
7. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth from the abyſs, ſhall make
8. war upon them; and overcome them. And their dead bodies ſhall fall in the ſtreets of the great city, ſpiritually called Sodom, where Jeſus was crucified.
9. And various people of different nations ſhall ſee their dead bodies three days and an half, and ſhall not
10. ſuffer them to be buried. And the inhabitants of the earth ſhall triumph over them; and congratulate each other on the death of thoſe who had roused them from the ſlumber of guilt. But after three
11. days and an half, they were reſtored to life; and
12. great fear fell on all who ſaw them. And a voice from heaven called to them, ſaying, Come up hither; and they aſcended in a cloud, as their enemies
13. ſtood beholding them. Then followed a dreadful earthquake, which overturned a tenth part of the city; and ſeven thouſand men were deſtroyed. The
14. reſt were frightened into a dependence on God. The ſecond woe is paſt, the third woe approacheth.—
15. Then the ſeventh angel ſounded his trumpet; and various voices were heard in heaven, ſinging aloud, The kingdoms of the earth are become the kingdoms of heaven. The Lord ſhall reign, and his anointed,
16. for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders who ſat before God, fell on their faces and worſhipped, ſaying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God,
17. eternal and almighty, who now appeareth in all thy
power

power and glory. Now shall the earth be judged ; 18.
now shall the wicked be punished ; and thy righteous
servants be rewarded.

And I saw the temple of God ; and the ark of the 19.
covenant standing in the temple : and I heard thun- CHAP.
der, accompanied with lightning, and an earthquake, XII.
and various voices. And I saw a wonderful appear- 1.
ance—a woman, as it were, invested with the sun,
and standing on the moon ; having her head incir- 2.
cled by a crown, composed of twelve stars. And 3.
being with child, she cried out in travel. And I 4.
saw a fiery dragon, with seven heads and ten horns.
On each head he wore a crown ; and with his tail he
swept away a third part of the stars of heaven ; and
threw them to the ground. And he stood before
the woman, ready to devour the child that should
be brought forth. A male child was born : and be- 5.
ing destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron,
it was caught up, and carried to the throne of God :
while the woman fled into the wilderness, where a 6.
place of refuge was provided for her, during a thou-
sand two hundred and sixty days.

Then followed war in heaven : Michael and his 7.
angels fought against the fiery dragon ; and prevailed
over him ; and his place in heaven was no longer 8.
found. The great dragon was cast out ; called the 9.
devil, and Satan, who deceived the world ; and his

5. Alluding to the prediction of Christ. Pf. ii. 9. Thou shalt
bruise them with a rod of iron.

10. angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, crying out, Now is salvation come; the power and authority of God, and the reign of Christ: for the accuser of the righteous before the throne of God, is now cast down.
11. He is overcome by the blood of the Lamb; and the testimony of those who have laid down their lives
12. for the truth. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and all that inhabit them. But woe to the world: for the devil is come down in great rage, knowing that his time is short.

13. Now when the dragon found that an end was put to his contention in heaven, he persecuted the woman upon earth. But the woman had wings given her; so she avoided his pursuit for a *time*, and *times*, and
14. *half a time*. And when in his power, he threw after her a violent stream of water, hoping to carry her
15. away in the flood; the Earth assisted the woman, and opening its mouth, swallowed up the flood, before
16. it reached the woman. Then the dragon, being enraged, gave up the pursuit; and made war upon the children of the woman; that is, upon all who keep the commandments of God, and bear testimony to

CHAP. Christ.

XIII.

1. And as I stood upon the shore, I saw a beast arise out of the sea, with seven heads and ten horns. And on each horn was a crown; and on each head
2. some blasphemous name was written. In form he was like a leopard; but his feet were like the feet of a bear; and his mouth like that of a lion. To him
the

the dragon gave up all his power and authority. And as I looked, one of his heads appeared to be greatly wounded; but his wound was healed.— Then all the Earth revered the beast; worshipping both him and the dragon, from whom he received his power, saying, Who is equal to the beast? Who is able to contend with him?—And he was permitted to speak blasphemy against God; and to make war upon his saints for the space of forty years and two months. So that all the world went after him, except those whose names are written in the book of life by the Lamb, which was slain from the foundation of the world. And now let all men attend. A conclusion shall soon be put to this violence and iniquity; and the faith and patience of the saints shall finally prevail.

Then I saw another beast arise out of the earth, which had the horns of a lamb, but the violence of a dragon. He seemed, as it were, to exercise authority under the first beast; whose wound was healed; and whom he obliged all the inhabitants of the earth to worship. And he made pretences to great signs and wonders; calling fire from heaven in the sight of men. He obliged also the inhabitants of the earth to make an image of the beast; and was permitted to give life to it. He set it up also to be worshipped; and he made his worshippers to receive a mark on their right hand, and on their foreheads—the name of the beast and his number; without

18. which no man was permitted to buy or sell. It is a matter of wisdom and understanding to compute the number of the beast; and it is to be computed in a human manner. The number is six hundred

CHAP. and sixty-six.

XIV.

- And I beheld a Lamb standing on mount Sion; and around him stood one hundred and forty-four thousand people; all of whom had the name of God written on their foreheads. And I heard voices from heaven loud as thunder; yet sweet as the sound of falling waters, accompanied with instruments of music. And they sang before the throne of God; but none could join them, except the hundred and forty-four thousand, who had been redeemed from the earth. These are they who have never been seduced into idolatry; but have followed the

18. It was common in the eastern languages to express things by enigmatical numbers. We have here a celebrated instance of this mode of expression in the *number of the beast*, which hath given occasion to a great variety of calculations and explanations. In the Greek language this number is found in the numerical letters of the word ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ, which the protestant does not scruple to affix on the Roman church; as it *latinizes* in every thing—in its prayers, bulls, decretals, and use of scripture: and the authority of Irenæus, who lived in the first century, is given for this explication; though, in fact, Irenæus is not satisfied with his own explication, but mentions it only as a conjecture. Others have found the same numerical letters in other names. A late writer, finding it to his purpose to make the French king, instead of the pope, the apocalyptic beast, finds them in the word LVDOVICUS. See Vivian's Explic. of the Rev.—Others, again, do not look for the enigmatical number in a name, but consider it as a date: and computing from the vision, find six hundred and sixty-six years nearly about the time of investing the bishop of Rome with temporal power.

Lamb.

Lamb. In them no guile hath been found : they are blameless in the sight of God. 5.

And I saw an angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel in his hand, which was open to every nation ; and he cried with a loud voice, Fear God, and glorify his name ; for the time of judgment is come. Worship Him that made heaven and earth, and all therein. 6.
7.

And another angel followed, crying, Babylon the great is fallen—is fallen ; because she made the nations of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornications. 8.
9.

And a third angel followed, crying, If any one worship the beast, or receive his mark, he shall drink of the wine of God's indignation, poured without mixture from the cup of his wrath : and he shall be tormented with fire : and the smoke of his torment shall ascend for ever ; and he shall neither have rest by day nor by night. 10.
11.

Then shall follow the happy rest of the saints ; those who have kept the commandments of God and the faith of Christ. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Now, faith the Spirit, they rest from their labours ; and meet the reward of their works. 12.
13.

And I saw an angel sitting on a white cloud, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle 14.

8. Alluding to Isaiah xxi. 9.

456 REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

15. in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple, crying to him, Put in thy sickle, and reap : for the time is come—the harvest of the earth is ripe.—Then he who sat upon the cloud, put in his sickle ; and the earth was reaped.

17. And another angel, with a sickle in his hand, flew
18. from the temple, and a fourth angel, that came from the altar, called to him, and said, Put in thy sickle, and gather the grapes of the earth ; for they are ripe.—And the angel put forth his sickle, and gathered the grapes of the earth ; and threw them into
19. the wine-press of the wrath of God : and the wine-press was trodden ; and the blood reached even to the horses' bridles, through the space of a thousand

CHAP. fix hundred furlongs.

- XV. And I saw another wonderful appearance in heaven
1. 2. —seven angels, having the seven last plagues, which finished the wrath of God on the wickedness of man.

- A vast plain was stretched before the eye, which had the appearance of molten glass ; and on it were assembled all those who had gained a victory over the beast ; and had escaped the pollutions of the world. With harps in their hands, they celebrated the praises of God ; and sang the song of Moses, the servant of the Lord ; and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and glorious are thy works, O Lord almighty. Just and true are all thy ways, O king

20. This bold image seems to express great slaughter.—But Bowyer conjectures, that instead of *χαλασας*, the true reading should be *χρησας* ; the blood came up the hoofs of the horses.

of faints. Let the whole earth, O Lord, glorify thy name; for thou only art holy. Let all the nations of the earth glorify thee: for thy righteous judgments are manifest to all. 4.

After this hymn of praise, the Holy of Holies was thrown open, and seven angels came out of the temple, cloathed in pure white, with golden girdles around their breasts. They had in their hands seven golden vials, filled with the wrath of God. In the mean time, the glory of the Lord, screened in dark clouds, took possession of the temple, so that no one could enter it, till the vials were poured out. Then I heard a voice from the temple, calling to the angels to pour out their vials. CHAP. XVI. 1.

The first angel poured out his vial over the earth; and a grievous ulcer was inflicted on all that had the mark of the beast.—The second angel poured out his vial on the sea; and its waters became blood; and all its inhabitants died.—The third angel poured out his vial over the rivers and fountains; and they also became blood. And as he emptied his vial, he cried, Righteous art thou, O Lord, who hast ordered all these things in judgment. They have shed the blood of thy faints; and thou hast given them blood to drink. And I heard another angel cry from the altar, True and just, O Lord, are all thy judgments.—The fourth angel poured out his vial on the sun; and its burning heat scorched the inhabitants of the earth; but they blasphemed the name of God; and were not led 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

458 REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

10. led by these plagues to repentance.—The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and horrible pain seized its inhabitants; and they wreathed themselves
11. in their misery, and blasphemed God; but repented
12. not of their sins.—The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the river Euphrates: and its waters were dried up; and a way was opened for the kings of
13. the east. And I saw seven unclean spirits, like frogs, issue from the mouth of the dragon, and from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false
14. prophets. They are the spirits of demons, working lying miracles, to bring the kings of the earth together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.
15. Behold, saith the Lord, I come suddenly. Blessed is he that keepeth himself from the pollutions of the
16. world. Then the armies of the earth were gathered together at Armagiddon.—The last angel poured
17. out his vial into the air: and I heard a voice from the temple, and the throne of God, crying, It is
18. finished. Then followed voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and a great earthquake, such as had never
19. been known, since the creation of the world. And the great city of Babylon was rent in three parts;

12. It is supposed by some interpreters, that the vials allude to the same periods as the trumpets. On the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the angels were loosed from the Euphrates. On the pouring out of the sixth vial, the Euphrates is dried up.

15. *Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments,* This alludes to a Jewish custom. When the captains of the temple went their rounds at night and found a Levite asleep on his watch, they set fire to his garment with the torches which they carried.

and

and drank fully of the cup of the wrath of God. The mountains disappeared from the land; and the islands from the sea; and hail-stones of a talent weight were poured from heaven upon mankind: yet still their wickedness continued, and they blasphemed the holy God.

Then one of the seven angels which poured out the vials, said unto me, Come hither, and I will shew thee what judgments shall be passed on the great harlot who sitteth on many waters; who hath committed whoredom with the kings of the earth; and hath intoxicated the nations with the wine of pollution. And he transported me in the spirit into the wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet-coloured beast, inscribed all over with blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. She was arrayed in scarlet and purple; and adorned with gold, and pearls, and precious stones; and held a golden cup in her hand, filled with the abomination of her corruptions. On her forehead was inscribed, *Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth*: and she was drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs.

I was astonished at the sight, and the angel asked me, Why I wondered? I will explain to thee, said

3. Whoever has seen the pope and cardinals ride on mules, covered almost over with scarlet-cloth, cannot but be put in mind of the woman riding on a scarlet-coloured beast.—Nor that I suppose the prophet alludes to so trifling a circumstance, in which there is in fact no immorality: yet the thing is singular.

- he, the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carries her, which hath seven heads and ten horns. The beast thou sawest, was; and is not. It ascended from the bottomless pit; and shall descend into it again: and the inhabitants of the earth, whose names are not written in the book of life, shall gaze after it, and wonder.—But now attend to the real meaning. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. There are also seven governments. Five are abolished—one is—another is not yet come; and when it cometh, it shall continue but a short time. The beast is the eighth; and yet he was also one of the seven; and shall go into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings. They have received no kingdom as yet; but receive the power of kings, one hour, with the beast. They have all but one mind; and shall unite in strengthening the beast, making war upon the Lamb.—But the Lamb shall overcome them: his power is above all; and his followers are chosen and faithful. The waters

10. *They are seven kings. Five are fallen.* These five species of government which are fallen, are supposed to be *kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and military tribunes*. How far interpreters may be right in this solution, is not easy to say: certain, however, it is, that both Livy and Tacitus enumerate the different modes of Roman government, that prevailed before the emperors, exactly in this manner. — *Romani sub regibus primum, consulibus deinde, ac dictatoribus, decemvirisque, ac tribunis consularibus gessere.* Liv. vi. 1. — *Urbem Romam a principio reges habuere. Libertatem, et consulatum L. Brutus instituit. Dictaturæ ad tempus fumebantur; neque decemviralis potestas ultra biennium; nec tribunorum militum consulare jus diu valuit.* Tac. An. lib. i.

which

which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are
 people and nations : and the ten horns of the beast 16.
 shall attack the whore, and destroy her. For God 17.
 hath put into their hearts to fulfil his will ; so they
 shall strengthen the beast only till the time which
 God hath appointed. The woman which thou sawest, 18.
 represents that great city which reigneth over the
 kings of the earth.

CHAP.
XVIII.

After this, I saw another angel come down from 1.
 heaven with great power. The whole earth was 2.
 enlightened with the splendour of his presence. And 3.
 he cried with a loud voice, Babylon the great is
 fallen—is fallen. She who had power to intoxicate
 the nations of the earth—to draw kings into whore-
 dom—and to enrich the world with her merchandize
 —is now become the companion of devils—and the
 habitation of impurity.

And I heard another voice from heaven, crying, 4.
 Come out of her, my people ; and be not partakers
 of her sins, that you may not suffer through her
 crimes. For her sins have reached unto heaven, 5.
 and have now called down justice from the throne of
 God. Now she feels the retribution of all her crimes. 6.
 The cup that she mixed for others, is returned
 doubly drugged to her own lips. Her anguish and 7.
 distress now equal her pride and luxury : and she who
 said in her heart, I sit as a queen ; I shall see no sor-
 row ; hath, in one short day, experienced an accu- 8.
 mulation of every evil.

Then shall the kings of the earth, who wantoned 9.
 with her in dalliance, bemoan her fate ; when stand- 10.
 ing

- ing afar off, they shall see the smoke ascend from the fire that consumes her. Alas ! alas ! they cry, thou great city, in how short a moment is thy destruction completed !——Then also shall the merchants of the earth wail over her, crying, who shall now purchase her rich metals, her precious spices, and her costly vestments. Alas ! alas ! She who was clothed in purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, is now in a moment stripped of all her gorgeous array, and all her wealth laid waste.——Then shall the seamen, and all who traffic in ships, when they see afar off the smoke ascending from her destruction, lament over her. Alas ! alas ! that great city, which once employed so many ships, is now in one moment become desolate †.——But, O ye heavens, rejoice—ye holy apostles and prophets—God hath revenged your cause.
21. Then I saw a mighty angel raise a mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus shall the great city of Babylon sink ; and her name shall be no more remembered. The voice of music and dancing shall no more resound within thy walls.—The light of the candle shall disappear—and the rejoicing of the marriage-feast no more be heard. The artist shall no more display his curious works ; nor the foreign merchant his rich stores. The sound of industry and labour shall cease in thy street. The forceries, by which thou hast deluded the nations, shall now be

† These lamentations over Babylon seem to be copied from the 26th and 27th chapters of Ezekiel.

abolished; and the blood of the saints and prophets 24.
who have been slain within thy walls, now call for
vengance.

CHAP.
XIX.

After these things, I heard a loud voice in heaven
crying, Hallelujah!—Salvation, honour, glory,
and power be ascribed to God! True and just are 1.
all thy judgments. Thou hast judged the great cor- 2. 3.
rupter of the earth, and hast avenged the blood of
thy servants upon their wicked persecutor, whose
smoke ascendeth for ever and ever.—Then all 4.
the host of heaven fell down before God; and united
in one voice of praise, Hallelujah!

After a solemn pause, the voice of praise again 5. 6.
began. It was loud as distant thunder, yet sweet
as the fall of waters: Hallelujah—Hallelujah, the
Lord Almighty reigneth. Praise him all his ser-
vants.—Exalt and glorify his name: for the mar- 7.
riage of the Lamb approacheth. His bride is ready. 8.
She is arrayed in pure white. Pure white expresses
the righteousness of the saints.

Then an angel said to me, These are the words 9.
of God: write the happiness of them who are in-
vited to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.—Then 10.
I fell at the feet of the angel to worship him, not
knowing who he was. But he rebuked me, saying;
Worship me not: I am thy fellow-servant; and
equally with thee bear testimony to Jesus. Worship
God alone. Thy labours in the gospel, and the
Spirit of prophecy, unite together in bearing testi-
mony to Jesus.

After

11. After this I saw a glorious figure mounted on a white horse. Faithfulness and truth went before him; and in righteousness he went to war with the
12. 13. remnant of his enemies. His eyes shone like flames of fire; and on his head he wore many crowns. His vesture was dipped in blood. His name no man
14. knew; but he was called the *Word of God*. And the armies of heaven followed him, riding on white
15. horses, and clothed in pure linen. Out of his mouth issued a sharp sword, with which he fought the battles of the Lord. He smote the nations, and ruled them with a rod of iron: he trod the wine-press
16. of the wrath of God. On his vesture was written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.
17. And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried with a loud voice to all the birds of prey that flew under the copes of heaven; Gather yourselves to-
18. gether to the banquet of the Lord. Ye shall eat the flesh of kings and mighty men, and devour
19. the carcases of all their mighty hosts.—And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, with their armies, gathered to make war on him that rode
20. on the white horse. And the beast was taken, and the false prophets who had deceived with lying won-

18. This noble image was probably taken from Ezekiel (xxxix. 17.). *Thus saith the Lord, speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field; Assemble yourselves together, and come; gather yourselves, on every side, to my sacrifice—that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood; even the flesh of the mighty; and the blood of the princes of the earth.*

ders;

ders; and they were thrown alive into the lake of fire. The rest were slain with the sword of him 21.
 who rode upon the white horse.—And I saw an angel descend from heaven with the key of the bot- CHAP.
 tomless pit in one hand, and a massy chain in the XX.
 other. And he seized the dragon, the old serpent, 1. 2.
 the devil, and bound him in the bottomless pit,
 and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, during 3.
 the space of a thousand years, that he may deceive
 the nations no more till that period end; and then
 he shall be loosed again for a little time.

Then I saw thrones placed, and judges sitting 4.
 on them in judgment; and I saw the souls of them
 who had suffered for the testimony of Jesus: they
 were appointed to reign with him a thousand years.
 But the rest of the dead were not raised till after 5.
 the thousand years were expired. This is the first
 resurrection; and happy are they who have a part 6.
 in it. On them the second death hath no power:
 but they shall be priests with God and Christ,
 and reign with him a thousand years. At the end of 7:
 that time shall Satan be loosed again, and go forth 8.
 to deceive the nations, from one end of the earth to
 the other. And Gog and Magog shall lead forth
 the armies of darkness, whose number is as the sand
 of the sea. And they overspread the face of the 9.
 earth; and compassed round the camp of the saints

8. Gog and Magog seem to allude to Ezekiel in the 38th and 9th chapters.

and the holy city. Then fire came down from God,
 10. and destroyed them. And the devil was cast into
 the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophets
 were thrown; and there he was tormented for
 ever.

11. Then I saw a large, white throne, and an awful
 figure sat upon it, from whose face the earth and
 the heavens fled. And the dead stood before God,
 12. and the books were opened. And the dead were
 judged from the books, according to their works.
 13. The sea gave up her dead; and death and the grave
 resigned all they had subdued; and all were judged
 14. according to their works. Then death and the
 15. grave were cast into the lake.—This is the second
 death: and whoever were found whose names were
 not written in the book of life, were cast into the
 CHAP. lake of fire.
 XXI.

1. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for
 the sea, and all the substance of the old world had
 2. passed away. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem,
 descending from heaven, prepared as a bride to meet
 3. her husband. Then a voice from heaven proclaimed,
 Behold, the tabernacle of God is now with man.
 God himself will dwell on earth; he will be their
 God, and they shall be his people. He will wipe
 4. away tears from their eyes. Sorrow, and pain, and
 death, and every evil thing are now passed away.
 5. Then he that sat on the throne, said, Behold I will
 6. make all things new. Write these things. All is
 7. finished. I am the first, and the last. From hence-
 forth

forth I give freely to the thirsty soul of the fountain of life: and thus will I be a father to him who hath overcome the temptations of the world; and he shall be a son to me; while the wicked shall be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. 8.

Then one of the angels who had the seven vials, said to me, Come up hither, and I will shew thee the bride of the Lamb.—As he said this, he carried me to a lofty mountain, and shewed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending from heaven in the glory of God. The light which spread around it, was like the sparkling lustre of a gem. Its walls were lofty, having twelve gates, at each of which sat an angel. Over its gates, which were three on every side of the four walls of the city, were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel: the wall had twelve foundations; on which were inscribed the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.—Then the angel who spoke to me, having a golden reed in his hand, measured the city and its walls. The city was square, and measured twelve thousand furlongs on the several sides of the wall, which were one hundred and forty-four cubits high, according to the measure of a man. The walls were of jasper; and the buildings of the city had the appearance of gold, but transparent like crystal. The walls were founded on precious stones of various kinds, twelve in number. The gates

8.

9.

10.

11.

12. 13.

14.

15.

16. 17.

18.

19. 20.

21.

- were of pearl; and the streets, like the buildings,
 22. of transparent gold.—But I saw no temple. The
 presence of God, and of the Lamb, was the only
 23. temple. Nor was there any sun or moon. The
 24. glory of the Lord was its only light. In this glo-
 rious light shall all nations walk which inherit the
 25. salvation of God. Its gates shall never be shut.
 26. Hither shall be brought whatever is great and glo-
 27. rious upon earth. No pollution shall be found in it.
 They only shall enter whose names are written in the

CHAP. book of life.

XXII.

- Then the angel shewed me a pure river, clear as
 1. 2. crystal, issuing from the throne, and running through
 the midst of the city; on the banks of which stood
 the tree of life, which bore fruit every month, and
 always of a different kind. The leaves of the tree
 3. were health to the nations. No curse can enter
 here. The throne of God secures it; where all his
 4. servants worship him in peace. They shall always
 stand before him, and his name shall be on their
 5. foreheads. They have no occasion for the sun, nor
 any other light; the Lord himself giveth them light,
 and they shall reign for ever.
 6. Then the angel declared the truth of all I had
 seen; assuring me, that the same Lord who had
 inspired the holy prophets, had sent him to give me
 7. this revelation of his will. All these things, he told
 me, should speedily come to pass; and happy should
 they be who paid a due attention to them.

Then

Then I fell down at the feet of the angel who shewed me these things. But he rebuked me, saying, Forbear: I am thy fellow-servant only, and one of the prophets, thy brethren, who obey the commandments of God. Him only shalt thou worship.—Then the angel said, Seal not up the prophecies of this book. The time approaches: yet let men have opportunity: let them either continue in their sins, if they are obstinate; or, if they are well-disposed, let them have the means of leading holy and godly lives.

Behold, I come quickly, saith the Lord, and bring my reward with me, and shall recompence every man according to his work. I am the Beginning, and the End: the First, and the Last. Happy are they who obey my commandments, and gain access to the tree of life. They shall enter the gates of the city, from which all wickedness shall be excluded.

Thus (said Jesus to me in his own person) I have sent my messenger to testify all these things to the churches. I am the root, and the branch of David—the morning star: and let all my holy servants wish for my coming; and desire to drink of the fountain of everlasting life.

Let no one alter the things contained in this book. If any one add to it, God will lay the plagues con-

18. These words are so apposite a conclusion to the whole *New Testament*, that some interpreters believe John meant it as such. It is certainly an apposite conclusion; but I find no ground for such an interpretation.

470 REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

19. tained in it on him. Or if any one diminish from
it, God will take from him his part in the book of
20. life, and in the blessings contained in it. The completion of *all* approaches.

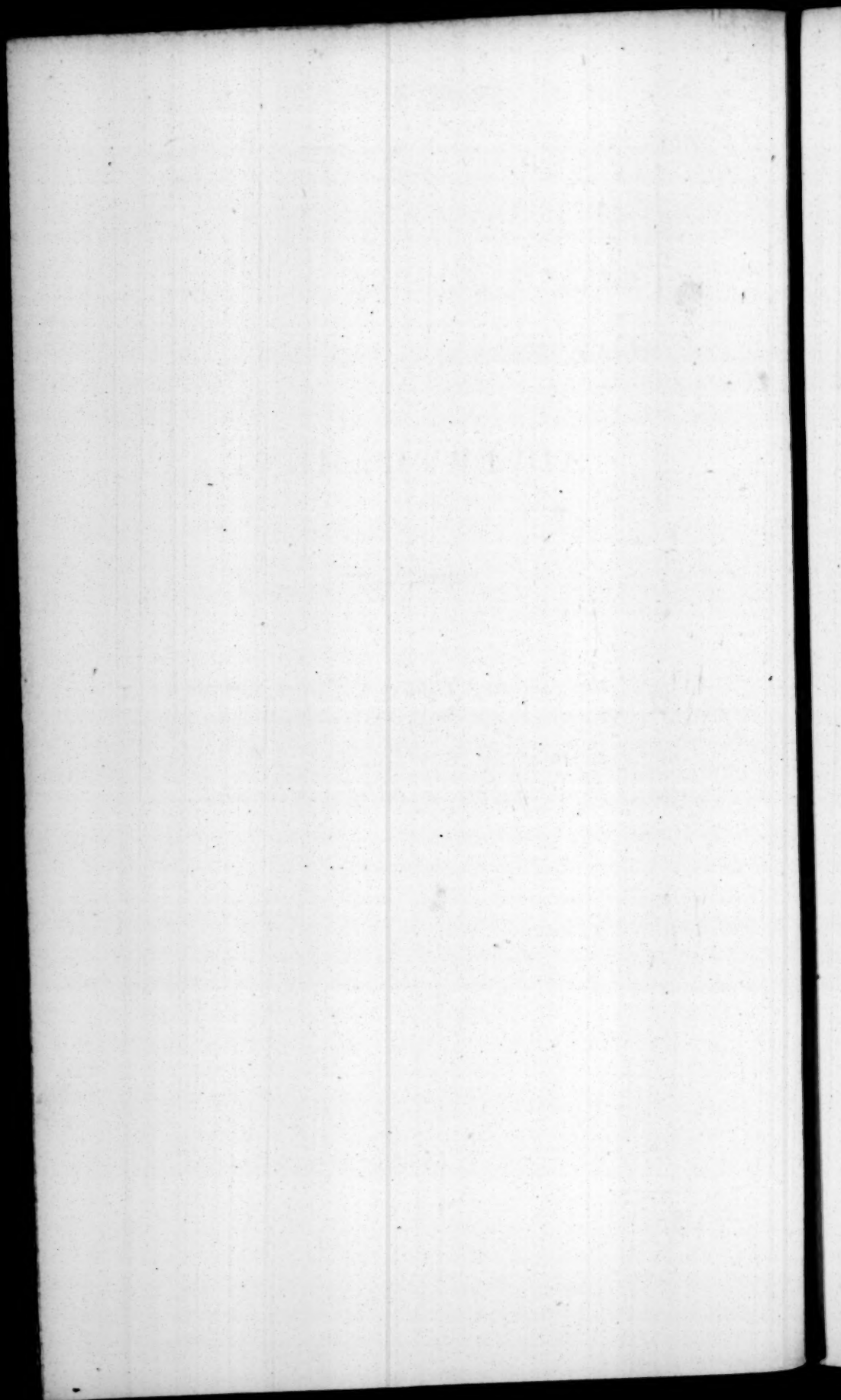
Amen! blessed Jesus, come as thou hast promised!

21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen!

END OF THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS the following Discourse, though written on a different occasion, seems no improper appendage to an Exposition of the New Testament, I shall make no apology for adding it as a conclusion to the whole.



MATTHEW, xiii. 31.

The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard-seed; which, indeed, is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest of herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come, and lodge in the branches thereof.

THIS short parable, and one or two others of the same texture, were intended to hold out the progressive state of the gospel. But interpreters, perhaps, in general, confine the meaning of these parabolic exhibitions within too narrow a period. They commonly consider them as exhibiting the propagation of Christianity, from the commencement of our blessed Saviour's ministry, till the time when Christianity shall obtain a footing over the earth. This period, no doubt, the parable before us includes; but, I think, it may reasonably be supposed also to include a more comprehensive one. It may begin earlier; and be extended farther. It may take in, I presume, the whole history of the Bible; and connect the book of Genesis with the Revelation of St. John.—I shall endeavour, therefore, in the following discourse, to explain it under this comprehensive idea.

Without any harsh interpretation, I think, what the text calls the *kingdom of heaven*, or the œconomy of the gospel, may be divided into four great periods—its *prophetic*—its *persecuted*—

persecuted—its *established*—and its *triumphant* state. We denominate each period from the *general cast* of the external circumstances in which it is engaged ; though these circumstances may blend together (as they often certainly do) in different periods. In the mean time, real Christianity is, in all periods, we know, the same.

The *prophetic* state of the gospel commences at the fall of man. The grain of mustard-seed was then sown. The intimation of God's gracious design to recover man from the mischief of that sad event, was, at first, like the *least of all seeds*. An obscure prophetic hint was the only hope on which the old world depended, aided by the mysterious rite of sacrifice ; to which God never would have *had respect* *, nor have distinguished its modes, if it had not been of his own appointment.

After the destruction of the old world, God separated to himself a particular family, as an instrument to prepare mankind for the reception of the gospel. In the *œconomy* of this family, which soon encreased into a great nation, was displayed the most wonderful series of divine contrivance, in that system of types, (historical and ceremonial,) which were afterwards *realized* in gospel-times. In the whole history of the world, we have nothing similar to this *sacred machinery*, if we may so speak. We trace the resemblance of it in no single analogy, through the whole scheme of God's moral government. This shews it, I think,—not a work in the common course of nature ; but a miraculous interposition of Providence, contrived for some peculiar purpose.

* See Gen. iv. 4. and a note on Heb. xi. 4.

Strange, no doubt, and unmeaning, many of these rites and ceremonies appeared to those who viewed them superficially. But as the great scheme of the gospel-dispensation began to open, and they were observed so connected with it in every part, the resemblance could not but have a great effect, both on the pious Jew, and on the reasoning Gentile; and contributed greatly, among other things, to bring over those large bodies of converts, of whom we read, on the first opening of Christianity.—Among this people, too, were laid up those wonderful records of *written* prophecy, which, giving language, as it were, to the mute signs of typical representation, led the devout inquirer still more directly to the acknowledgment of those divine truths he sought for.

After the *prophetic* state of the gospel, we arrive at its *persecuted* one. We still characterize each period, as I observed, by its *predominant feature*.—In the fulness of time, our blessed Lord appeared on earth.—From the grand and pompous display of types and prophetic notices, through so long a period, and dispersed, by means of the Jewish œconomy and literature, through so many countries, not only the Jew himself, but many of the heathen also, expected a prince of such power and greatness, as the world had never seen. The splendid court, the arrayed battalions, the triumphal chariot, the extended empire, were all to be the accompaniments of this potent monarch.

But it immediately appeared, that the *kingdom of heaven* disclaimed all connection with the pomp and grandeur of the world. It was denominated the *kingdom of heaven*, in very opposition to the *kingdoms of the world*.—This, however,

however, was an indignity and disappointment, which the world could not bear. Its pride, its interest, and every thing it valued, were offended. If Christianity opposed the world, the world immediately set itself to oppose Christianity. Persecution began. The blessed Jesus was the first victim. The disciple could not expect better treatment than his Lord. A succeeding generation arose. Christianity still disclaimed all commerce with the guilty world; and the guilty world, in return, still shewed that it had yet the pre-eminence. *The kings and rulers of the earth stood up, and took counsel against the Lord, and against his Anointed.*

As Christianity extended, the sphere of persecution was enlarged. It was not now carried on in the sparing and cautious manner of the first persecutors; when a wicked prince killed *James, the brother of John, with the sword; and because he saw it pleased the people, proceeded to take Peter also.* But whole bodies of men were now dragged to death—not only to death, but to extreme torture. A Christian and a martyr were, in those days, equivalent expressions.

In the mean time, religion throve and flourished, under all this violence. Then were displayed the Christian Graces, in all their purity and beauty.—Faith, and Hope, and Charity, appeared with all their heavenly train of virtues—piety—humility—meekness—and perseverance in duty.—Then were good offices returned for cruelty and malice. Then was an indifference to the world in every shape discovered—its allurements and its menaces were equally despised. None became Christians but from principle; and the hopes of religion shewed themselves superior to the severest trials.—The excellence of Christianity, in the end, prevailed. It overbore all opposition;

fiction; and the rulers of the earth at length embraced and took it under their protection. It became *established* and *endowed*. This brings us to the *third* period of the gospel.

We should naturally suppose the Christian church, now relieved from all its difficulties, would have united in one song of praise and thanksgiving; and that its several members would have shewn their gratitude to God, by the sanctity of their lives. But it is not common with mankind to be grateful to God, in proportion to his benefits. It is much more common to turn his blessings into wantonness. Thus it fared with Christianity. Being reconciled with the world, it immediately became its intimate friend.—In some places, it was introduced to all the heathen superstitions, the Gothic ignorance, the barbarous and immoral rites and customs which prevailed: and with too many of them it closed.—In other places, strange interpretations of scripture were taken up; monstrous heresies arose; and Christians quarrelled among each other with the bitterest enmity, and on the most trifling grounds.—As mankind grew more enlightened, Christianity made an acquaintance with philosophy. Philosophy threw new lights on the old system of religion. The great truths of the gospel became offensive to the improved reason of man. Though Christianity was formerly at perfect variance with the wisdom of the world, the wisdom of the world became now the criterion of a divine revelation. Men were not now to be imposed on, like their simple forefathers. They were too wise to believe any thing which they could not clearly explain. Though the *works of nature* often puzzled them, they would allow no difficulties in the *kingdom of grace*.

As it fared thus with the *doctrines* of the gospel, so it did with its *precepts*. In early days, it was said, that *he who was the friend of the world, was the enemy of God*. But this wholesome caution was soon forgotten. The wit of man was employed to make up a kind of fashionable religion. All the arts of reasoning were used to reconcile religion with expedience; and to explain with nicety, how God and mammon might be served together. Indeed, the connection became so close between Christianity and the world,—the precepts of the former so modelled by the maxims of the latter, that it was not easy to distinguish and separate the several interests of these two intimate friends. It was *real* Christianity no longer; *nominal* Christianity answered all the ends that were desired.—In those mighty plans of ambition, in which the world formerly engaged alone, Christianity now united. Sometimes it raised a spiritual tyranny, domineering over the consciences of men; and calling *fire from heaven*, in opposition to every gentle precept of the gospel.—Sometimes, again, thirsting after temporal dominion, it would lay waste whole countries by fire and sword.—In private life, whatever schemes of dissipation and pleasure were going forward, though wholly opposite to the principles and simplicity of the gospel, Christianity was always ready to make one: modish fashions were every where adopted, instead of Christian virtues; and the fear of God gave way to the fear of the world. The gospel might talk, as it pleased, of the *narrow way to life*, and the *broad way to destruction*. That road which all people took must be right; and the shameless pastors of the church often led the way.—In projects of trade, also, to whatever length pursued; however made the vehicles of luxury and vice; to whatever objects extended, even the

most inhuman and unnatural; in whatever wickedness involved, frauds, perjuries, breach of trust—it was all alike, Christianity never objected—never refused its warmest consent.—Then, again, with regard to that great worldly code, the point of honour, Christianity at once entered into the spirit of it; and easily saw how very superior it was to the gentleness of gospel-precepts; and how much more effectual than the best of them, in the preservation of decorum among mankind. The text might cry, *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.* These were precepts fit only for apostles and primitive Christians. Modern Christianity throws all these obsolete precepts behind; and armed with vengeance, perhaps even for an indiscreet word, will rush, with stopped ears, to the murder of a friend.

Not but there are, in this age, we doubt not, and have been in all ages, many who govern their actions by the sincere principles of the gospel; and would lay down their lives, if called on, in its defence, with the firmness of martyrs. God has never left himself without these faithful witnesses.—In some countries, also, the truth of Christianity, no doubt, is more generally felt than in others. The fashions of the day are less adverse to it. But it must still be remembered, we characterize times by their leading features—of ours, I trust, the features are not here overcharged.

How long it may please the Almighty, that this more corrupt state of our religion shall exist, we know not. We hold an opinion, however, founded on prophecy, that, in some future period, after Christianity hath spread itself over this earth, it will exchange its corrupt state for a *triumphant* one. We found our belief principally on the
Revelation

Revelation of St. John. This divine book (authenticated beyond cavil *) holds out an amazing display of wonderful events—grand and sublime, in the highest degree; but soaring beyond the capacity of man. The *seals*, the *trumpets*, and the *vials*, have all been explained by various interpreters, and in various ways: but, I doubt, whether in any way that is fully satisfactory. All interpreters make them hold out the state of the church: but, in their details, they often lead us among the trivial events of civil history; which, in many instances, seem but little connected with the affairs of Christianity.

Indistinct, however, as these sublime, prophetic images may be; we are authorized, at least, to gather from them these truths—that, after some great revolutions and fearful events; some trying and purifying conflicts, which the church of Christ may have yet to undergo, (though of what nature, or through what agency, we pretend not to explain,) it will receive a form entirely different from that in which it had ever before appeared. All prophecies, yet unfulfilled, will now be complete. It will no longer be the *persecuted* church it once was. It will no longer be the *corrupt* church it now is: but all offence of every kind being done away, the wickedness of the world, which hitherto had the upper hand, will be subdued under the excellence of Christian virtues. Then all that glory, and all that happiness will take place, which we may conceive, when the principles of the Christian religion shall be divested of all worldly prejudices, all mischievous projects, and all wicked connections—when the whole Christian world shall be united in one great family, and join in praise to God, and universal benevolence to man.

* See the preface to the Revelations.

We enter not into the niceties of this question, nor pretend to explain who are to be partakers of the *first*, and who of the *second resurrection*: nor to decipher any of those wondrous images, which carry the imagination into vast, unknown, and boundless regions. We go no farther than we seem fully authorized by the text: and though not so far as the interpretations of some learned men have led us; yet, at least, as far as that point, in which all learned men seem to agree.

Here, then, we see the grand scheme of Christianity complete; of which the Bible, from one end to the other, is the great record. It opens with the origin of the gospel, in the fall of man; and leading us through the Jewish history, as the vehicle of all those prophetic intimations, preparatory to Christianity, makes its first great pause at the opening of the New Testament. There, the prophecies of the Old being realized, we are informed the gospel soon began to spread in the world; and as soon to suffer a state of *persecution*. For its full *establishment* and wealthy endowment, in a future period, we look into profane history; and we want no evidence, but what our own times can furnish, of the *great corruption* into which it has fallen, in these declining ages. Our holy record, however, leaves us not comfortless; but holds out to us still one period more, its *triumphant* state; in which, all its difficulties being removed, it will assume its native glory.

I shall conclude with a few remarks on the principal uses which seem to arise from this extended view of the Christian religion.

In the first place, we have an answer to the objector's question, Why did Christianity appear so late in the world? —How does he know it is late?—The world, for any thing he knows, may yet be in its infancy. Christianity, we are assured, has many a hard conflict to pass through, before it arrive at that state, which itself is said to last a *thousand years* *; and, under that prophetic term, perhaps a much longer period. Christianity hath not yet overspread the face of the earth; which, we believe from prophecy, it must do, before it arrive at its triumphant state. We have seen it, in our day, making large strides in the east and in the west. But though much is done, still more remains undone. Half the world is yet in darkness and ignorance. As learning and the arts of civilization spread, the light of the gospel, we doubt not, will spread with them †. It matters not what instruments God employs: he can work with those which seem the most unlikely to forward his designs. The soldier with his sword, the merchant with his cargo, and the settler with his plough, all unite in promoting the schemes of God.

Besides, the objector should be aware that some *preparation* to introduce the Christian religion was necessary. If Christianity had been introduced *earlier*, the grand proof from prophecy would have been in proportion *weaker*.—It might be necessary, also, to shew mankind, from the miserable efforts of their own reason, how much a *heavenly instructor* was wanted ‡,—and from the ravages of sin, how much they stood in need of a *Saviour*. This, too, required time to effect. The ravages of sin, no doubt, still continue. But its empire, on the whole, is much repressed by the gos-

* See Rev. xx. 4.

† See a note on Romans x. 14.

‡ See the Preface, page vi.

pel : and as to individuals, Christianity hath shewn such numerous and illustrious instances of shining characters, as never appeared under any other influence.—In the mean time, with regard to the salvation of mankind, we have the best scriptural authority, that all men who lived up to the lights they had received, both before Christ and after him, are saved through His merits, who is styled the *lamb slain from the foundation of the world*.

The *consolation* which this extended view of Christianity hath diffused, through all ages of the church, and may still diffuse, should be considered as another great use arising from it. While the grain of mustard-seed had yet spread but little above the ground, the expectations of patriarchs and pious Jews were awakened. They saw the glorious prospect afar off; and waited, with holy hope, for the *consolation of Israel*.

The same idea animated the Christian, in later periods of the church. It seems, indeed, to be often touched on by St. John in the Revelations; and is, perhaps, the best key to open, at least, the *general intention* of that mysterious book.—In the persecuted period of the church, when all around was black and gloomy—when the sword was unsheathed, the fire kindled, and every engine at work, to extirpate the gospel; the expiring martyr, with an eye of despondency, might have foreseen nothing but ruin to the cause in which he suffered, had he not been cheered by a prophetic ray, animating his breast with an assurance that he was a holy victim, offered up in defence of that religion, which was protected by the hand of heaven; and should exist to the end of time—and that the same good Providence which protected it, would protect also his faithful servants, who died in its defence.

Again, the pious Christian, in these corrupt times of the church, when he sees dissipation and wickedness overbearing all things like a flood; and every appearance, as if real Christianity were about to leave the land—when his spirit sinks within him at the dismal view—he is consoled by looking into future times; and there, in the visions of prophecy, seeing the holy religion he professes, reviving with ten-fold brightness; and triumphing, at length, over all the impurities of the world.

Another use, arising from this extended view of Christianity, is giving courage, firmness, and modest dignity to all the true professors of the gospel. They are the means, under Christ, to keep alive the holy flame of religion, in this corrupt state of things. They are, as their Saviour tells them, the *salt of the earth*, to preserve it from corruption; and may humbly consider themselves as carrying on the great scheme of redemption in union with Christ.

We trace an analogy through all God's works. As each individual undergoes a state of trial; so, it seems, does the church of Christ, as a general body. In early times, it underwent the trial of persecution; in these times, it undergoes the harder trial of prosperity. Both, no doubt, are necessary to prepare it for the last great change which awaits it. The Jewish religion, imperfect as it was, prepared the world for Christianity; and Christianity, in its present state, however defective, is a preparation, no doubt, for its future period.—As, then, the holy confessors and martyrs of ancient times were the means of preserving the spirit of religion alive, under all its fiery trials; so are the pious professors of the gospel, in these days of indulgence and languor.

Let

Let them, then, consider, with proper humility, the situation in which they stand. Let them consider, that it is not less, but even more dangerous, than that of the ancient Christians; inasmuch as the insidious friendship of the world is more dangerous to religion than its open violence. Instead of joining, therefore, in the corruptions around them, or even, by an incorrect behaviour, breaking down the fences of religion; let its pious professors, especially its appointed ministers, stand up boldly in its defence. Let them consider the world as their greatest enemy. Let them keep it, as it were, at arm's length; and not suffer it to close in upon them. Thus, by their firmness and example, may they shew themselves to be humble instruments, in the hands of God, both of lessening the corruptions of the present times, and of preparing and leading forward Christianity to those wonderful events of its last great period.

Lastly, from the several periods of the gospel taken together in one view, we draw a strong argument for its truth. Let us see how the comparison stands with any human institution. We select one of the most extraordinary. When an enterprising chief, at the head of a body of armed men, introduces a new religion, we confess it to be a very surprising event; as nothing is more difficult than to eradicate religious prejudices. Yet still we can account for this revolution on human principles. The subtle impostor, with great sagacity, adapting his plan to the circumstances of the times, told his followers, that the Jewish religion had been good at first; but on its becoming corrupt, it had been superseded by Christianity—that Christianity also had been good at first; but as it was now become corrupt, he had been sent from God to reform it. Such reasoning, in an age, and in a country, where real religion was almost extinct, (as we know
it

it was, at that time, in the east,) was specious. With equal subtilty he strengthened his plan, by retaining so much of the old religion, as to make people believe they rather received an improvement of what they had before, than an institution wholly new. In this, too, he plausibly mimicked the process of Christianity from Judaism. At the same time, instead of the spiritual rewards of the gospel, for which his corrupt disciples had little relish, he promised a future state, replete with the highest degree of indulgence and sensuality, which was so agreeable to their manners: while fire and sword were threatened to those who opposed him—engines more terrifying than the distant penalties of the gospel.—Though the revolution, therefore, introduced by this impostor, was a wonderful combination of art and force, and produced a singular phenomenon in the history of mankind; yet still it presents nothing but what may well be accounted for, on human principles.

But when we see a religion introduced with all that striking apparatus of prophecies and prophetic types—commencing at the beginning of the world, and not brought to perfection, perhaps, till the conclusion of it—successfully opposing, though violently persecuted, all the powers of the earth—and at length overturning every thing that stood in its way, without worldly threat, or allurements of any kind; but merely by its divine power, and the mild yet forcible persuasives of its own purity and excellence—when we see it afterwards assailed by the flattery and corruptions of the world; and though, in many instances, overpowered, yet, in many, rising superior to this trial also—when, instead of losing ground, by these different attacks, we see it prevailing, more and more, in various parts of the world, to this very day—and finally, when we have assurances from prophecy, (with which the course of its progress hitherto is perfectly analogous,) that it will, in the end, prevail over the wickedness

ness of the world, and display itself universally in its native colours—when we find such a combination of circumstances, all centring in one point, it is impossible to attribute so gradual, so complete, so wonderful a plan to any human means. The grandeur of the whole, and the amazing coherency of the several parts, are similar only to the great works of creation; and we cannot but acknowledge in them the hand of God.

THE END.